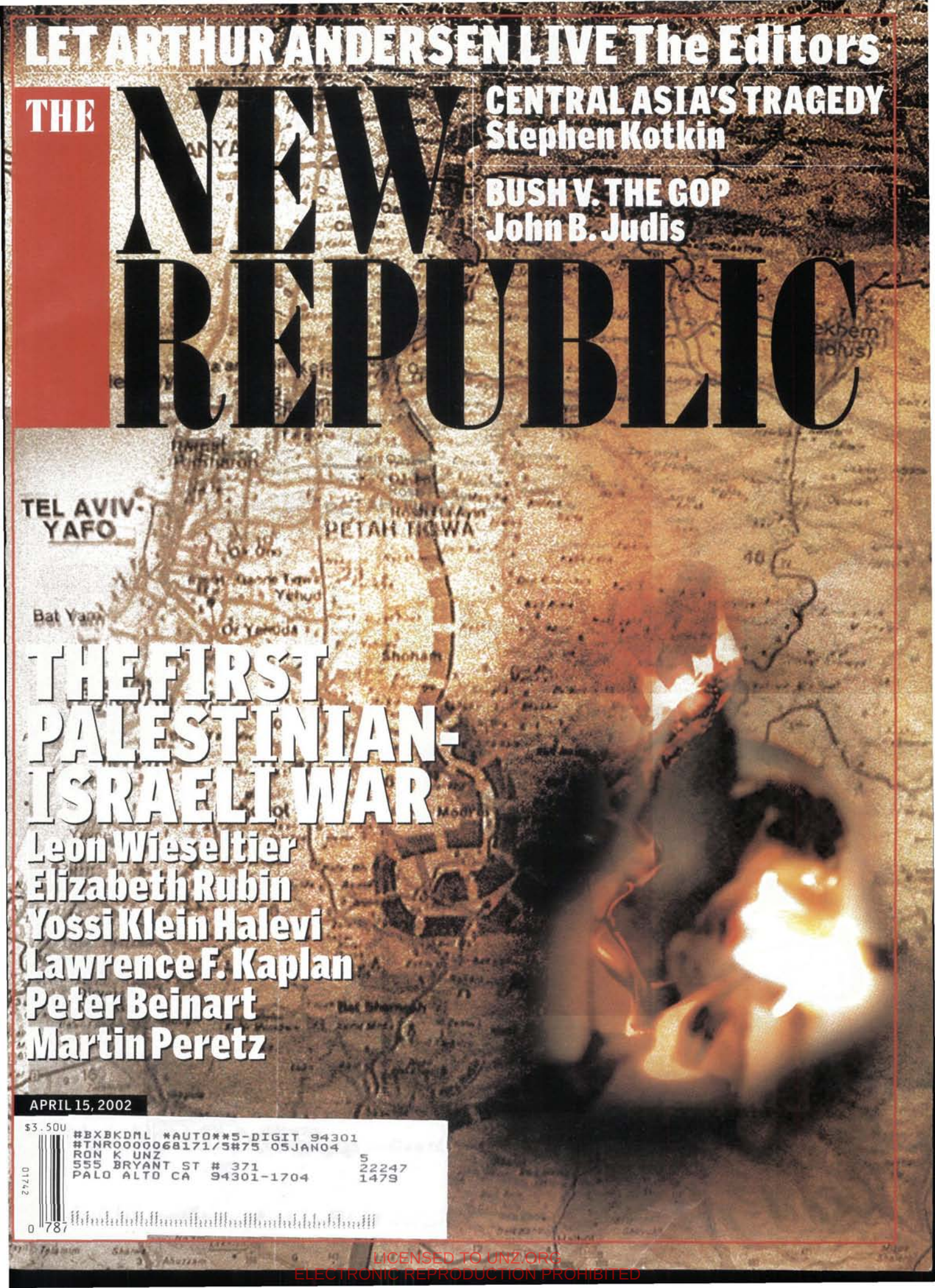
LET ARTHUR ANDERSEN LIVE The Editors

THE NEW REPUBLIC

CENTRAL ASIA'S TRAGEDY
Stephen Kotkin

BUSH V. THE GOP
John B. Judis



THE FIRST PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI WAR

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APRIL 15, 2002

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Moral force

TO THE EDITORS:

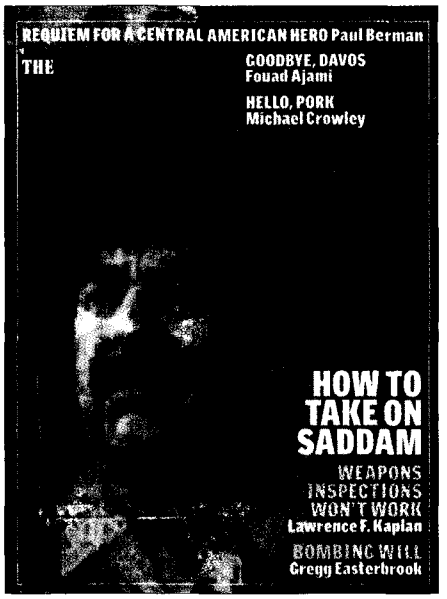
Before we join gladly in Gregg Easterbrook's call for a counterproliferation war against Iraq, we should consider how such action might speak to India and other nations, which could find a dangerous lesson in Easterbrook's "moral obligation to act in advance against those who plan to do mass murder" ("Smart Bomb," February 25). Be that as it may, the bulk of Easterbrook's article seeks to assuage whatever moral qualms we might have about initiating war against Iraq by advocating a focused attack on weapons-of-mass-destruction research and production facilities. This would certainly be better than general war against that beleaguered country, but his case simply overstates the capabilities of U.S. air forces and misconstrues the nature of the targets available in Iraq. If Iraq were to build its weapons research and production sites a few hundred yards away from civilian facilities, then JDAMS would be appropriate munitions. But do we have any reason to believe that Saddam Hussein has carefully separated his weapons programs from civilian centers, and do we expect our air forces to show restraint when an identified target sits across the street from a housing complex? We Americans must not embrace the delusion that technological advancement allows escape from the moral complexity of war.

CHARLES KNIGHT, *Co-Director*
Project on Defense Alternatives
Commonwealth Institute
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Thinking again

TO THE EDITORS:

It is unfortunate that Istvan Deak's thoughtful review of a book dealing with alleged World War I atrocities is marred by a number of insupportable assertions ("The Thinkable," February 18). The contentions that the "true nature of the Holocaust became known only during the last days of the war" and that "reluctance to believe in the reality of the German mass killings" was a "factor in the Allied unwillingness to act on behalf of the Jews" are historically inaccurate. The mass killings of Jews in the rear of the Russian front started to be reported in the United States in the fall of 1941. Although the details of the operation of the death camps were not immediately known, both British and U.S. authorities were well aware of the fact that mass killings of Jews were taking place. By the end of 1942 the interested American public knew a great deal about the



killings, and Congress became aware of it as well. It was in late 1943 that U.S. Treasury Department officials called for a comprehensive rescue effort in a memorandum entitled "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews." That memorandum spurred President Franklin D. Roosevelt to establish the War Refugee Board, which played a very important role in saving thousands of Hungarian Jews.

Deak is equally mistaken in his contention that bombing Auschwitz was "a strange idea mostly concocted long after the war" and "would have meant killing thousands of inmates." As well documented in David Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews*, the bombing was proposed to the War Department in summer 1944 and was turned down. As for Deak's contention that the bombing would have killed thousands of inmates: The proposal was to destroy the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau, at a substantial distance from the Auschwitz labor camp. The inmates located at any one time at Birkenau were scheduled to be put to death in short order. For most of those who would have been present at Birkenau when the bombs dropped, it would indeed have meant one form of death substituting for another. But the concomitant destruction of the gas chambers would have meant that these no longer would have been available for killing the next shipment of Jews.

RICHARD SCHIFTER
Bethesda, Maryland

ISTVAN DEAK REPLIES:

Both subjects mentioned by Richard Schifter boast a large and controversial literature. The Allies both knew and did not know about the true extent of the Holocaust, and what the British counterintelligence was aware of was many times more than what even well-informed Western statesmen were told or were willing to accept as truth. Witness U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, a Jew, who in 1943 refused to believe the report of Jan Karski—even though the latter had been sent by the Home Army in Warsaw specifically to alert the Allies to the Nazi annihilation of Jews in Poland. Or take the case of General Eisenhower who, according to his own memoirs, had only vague notions about the concentration camps until shown the one at Ohrdruf, Germany, on April 4, 1945. Then there's U.S. Brigadier General Telford Taylor, chief prosecutor at the so-called Nuremberg follow-up trials, who wrote in *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials: A Personal Memoir*: "I myself did not become aware of the Holocaust until my exposure to the relevant documents and witnesses at Nuremberg."

With regard to the bombing of Auschwitz-Birkenau, I can only summarize what I wrote in TNR on February 15, 1999, in connection with Richard Breitman's valuable study, *Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew*. By the time the bombing of Auschwitz-Birkenau was proposed to the War Department and became a genuine possibility, in the summer of 1944, it was almost over at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The last huge mass of victims, nearly a half-million Hungarian Jews, had come and gone; the majority went to the gas chambers, but a significant minority went to factories in Germany. Note that, in 1944, all inmates at Birkenau were not "scheduled to be put to death in short order." Rather, many of them were sent to work in Germany, where again many died. But others, whom Allied bombs might have killed at Birkenau, survived to tell their story. Besides, the Nazis knew well how to annihilate people without gas chambers—as in 1941, when the *Einsatzgruppen* shot to death more than one million victims. Moreover, the Germans would have gained a great propaganda advantage by showing that it was not they but the Allies who were killing the prisoners at the camps. Finally, in 1944, most people at Birkenau were not working anywhere, but those who had not been gassed were idling and starving in the camp, next to the gas chambers, waiting to be transferred elsewhere. I maintain that the bombing of Auschwitz is a mistaken idea insisted upon by those who wish to blame the Allied leadership for something or other during the war. ■

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ANTI-SEMITISM.
It's not a HISTORY LESSON.
It's a CURRENT EVENT.

Part 4. Teaching & Inciting Hate on a Global Scale

"Have no mercy on the Jews....Wherever you meet them, kill them." — Dr. Ahmad Abu Halabiya, sermon at Zayed bin Sultan Nahyan mosque, Gaza*

"Jewish organizations consolidated a hellish plan to take over the world..." — *Al-Watan,* Saudi Government newspaper*

"We warn the U.S. and advise her to get rid of the Jews." — Abdallah Bin Matruk Al-Haddal, Saudi preacher from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, on Al-Jazeera TV*

Do we learn nothing from the past? Is the coordinated Arab hate campaign against the Jews in the Middle East to go unchallenged by government, religious and media leaders except in the U.S.? Can they ignore what happened in the 1930s in Europe and recently in Rwanda and Bosnia? Words can and do kill.

Official government newpapers and TV stations in many Arab and Muslim nations are engaged in vitriolic attacks on the Jews. Blood libel and Jewish conspiracy theories and Nazi-like lies are being repeated daily, no longer disguised as anti-Israel or even anti-Zionist.

At ADL we know too well people are not born bigots. They must be taught to hate.

And they are being taught to hate and attack the Jews and Israel and America in Muslim pulpits and by official Arab media and via the Internet across all boundaries — religious, cultural, political and geographic. It is time for world leaders and good people everywhere to join the U.S. in speaking out against this hatred that is being stirred up. ADL urges you to join in this fight before it is too late.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Choose

SET AGAINST THE murders in Netanya, Haifa, and Jerusalem, the cool language of strategy sounds almost obscene. And yet the fact remains: Israel and America's reaction to last week's horror makes no sense.

The incoherence was encapsulated by President George W. Bush's statement on Saturday, March 30. Yasir Arafat, he said, has "got to make it absolutely clear that the Palestinian Authority does not support these terrorist activities, and use the security forces to prevent them from happening." The statement managed to be nonsensically dovish and nonsensically hawkish at the same time. It was nonsensically dovish because asking Arafat to make it "absolutely clear" that he does not support terrorism is like asking John Gotti to make it "absolutely clear" that he opposes organized crime. On the day Bush spoke, *The New York Times* ran a graph showing that well over one-third of the terrorist murders of the last 15 months have been committed by forces under Arafat's direct control. Arafat's offense isn't that he's an insufficiently resolute opponent of terrorism; it's that he's the closest thing Palestinian terrorism has to a leader.

But Bush's statement was nonsensically hawkish as well because, even if Arafat were inclined to try to stop terrorism (and at times during the Oslo peace process, he stopped it fairly effectively), there's no way he could now. Bush demanded that Arafat "use the security forces to prevent [terrorist activities] from happening." But as Bush spoke, Arafat was huddled in a room with no electricity, no water, and Israeli soldiers shooting outside. His "security forces" had seen their offices and vehicles destroyed, and his West Bank security chief was blockaded in his house as Israeli troops laid siege. The "security forces" from which Bush demanded action effectively no longer exist.

There are two ways to resolve the contradictions in Bush's statement: one honestly dovish and one honestly hawkish. Each is dangerous and costly. But either is better than what the American and Israeli governments are doing now—which is dangerous, costly, and so internally inconsistent that it is guaranteed to fail.

The dovish option is to give Arafat the means to combat Palestinian terrorism—not just practically but also politically—and pray that he has the will. That strategy may sound absurd today, but Israel essentially pursued it for much of the 1990s. And while it hardly worked well, it cost fewer Israeli lives than Ariel Sharon's policy of the last few months. The assumption behind such a policy is that Arafat is no more committed to violence now than he was committed to nonviolence at the height of Oslo. He and most other Palestinians are ultimately indifferent to the means—violent or nonviolent, honorable or ghastly—by which they pursue a Palestinian state. And if you establish a negotiated process that seems likely to achieve that objective, fewer Palestinians will try to achieve it by force.

Sharon has worked to scuttle this option ever since taking power. His refusal to begin political negotiations until the violence stopped—a demand largely endorsed by the United States—was meant to show the Palestinians that violence didn't pay. But most Palestinians have interpreted it to mean the opposite: that violence was the only path, because Sharon would never engage in serious negotiations toward a Palestinian state. And that interpretation is not absurd. After all, Sharon was a vocal opponent of Oslo throughout the '90s. His Cabinet—at least as presently constituted—would never agree to a Palestinian state on most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Which is presumably why it has methodically expanded Jewish settlements in both territories.

Sharon's refusal to give the Palestinians any serious hope of achieving a state through negotiations is part of the reason the region has exploded in violence. But that doesn't mean it's crazy. After all, the premise on which the dovish option rests—that the Palestinians will turn away from violence if nonviolence offers them a state on most of the West Bank and Gaza—suffered a disastrous blow when Arafat rejected Ehud Barak and Bill Clinton's proposals at Camp David and Taba. The lesson of that rejection is that Arafat and his people may indeed *prefer* violence to nonviolence in their effort to create a state—because their territorial demands are so extreme that only military victory over Israel could ever bring them into being. Doves who want to resuscitate Arafat in the expectation that he will make a different choice than he did in late 2000 are choosing hope over experience. Maybe the Saudis and other Arab governments—fearful that a Palestinian-Israeli war will destabilize their regimes—would pressure him to say yes this time. That's a long shot. But at least it resolves the contradiction in Bush's statement: If you're going to demand that Arafat stop terrorism, you have to give him the means to do so.

If the dovish option resolves the contradiction in the second half of Bush's statement, the hawkish option resolves the contradiction in the first half. If you truly believe Arafat is a terrorist—and will never stop being one regardless of the incentives for peace—then you have to kill or exile him. To crush a terrorist network, you have to remove its leader, because that's the only way to crush its morale.

Hawks recognize this, but then they usually start musing about the "moderate Palestinian" leadership that would follow in Arafat's wake. That's a pipe dream. Most of Arafat's current rivals—Sheikh Yassin of Hamas, Marwan Barghouti of the Tanzim militia—are already more fanatically pro-terrorism than he is; and if Israel removed Arafat, the whole Palestinian polity would be radicalized to an almost unimaginable degree.

In other words, honest hawks must acknowledge the enormity of what they are proposing. After eliminating Arafat, Israel would have to reoccupy the West Bank and Gaza for a generation. Only the permanent deployment of the Israeli army—in every city and town in the territories—could hope to quash the massive terrorist reaction that Arafat's death or exile would provoke. Israel would also have to reestablish a civilian administration in the territories—because unless Israel runs Palestinian schools, they will continue to breed hatred and never produce a generation of leaders willing to accept the compromises Arafat wouldn't. The Sharon government says that its struggle against the Palestinians is part of the global war on terrorism. The logic of the war on terrorism is that you overthrow terrorist regimes (i.e., the Taliban) and replace them with indigenous anti-terrorist ones (i.e., Hamid Karzai). And if you can't find indigenous anti-terrorist ones, you govern the territory yourself.

Are either of these options attractive? No; they're both hideous. But unlike the status quo—which prevents Arafat from stopping terrorism and prevents Israel from stopping it as well—each at least offers a vision for how Israel can once again be made safe. Why should Israeli and American leaders gamble on plans with so high a likelihood of failure? Because that is how desperate things have become.

PETER BEINART

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Accounts Due

NO ONE LIKES to be indicted. But Arthur Andersen and its supporters have been particularly vocal in decrying the Justice Department's decision to hold the entire accounting firm responsible for its role in the Enron debacle. "[T]he government indicted the whole firm," complained U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Tom Donohue in a recent CNN appearance. "[But] you don't destroy the whole company because of the behavior of a couple of people."

Actually, you do. Especially when the company as a whole creates an environment that encourages its employees to misbehave. After all, this isn't the first time Andersen has gotten into trouble. In the past ten years the firm has paid out hundreds of millions in claims to shareholders in companies like Waste Management, Sunbeam, and Boston Chicken for signing off on highly questionable accounting practices.

But just because the indictment—which, in effect, gives the firm the death penalty—is justified doesn't mean it's smart. In fact, it's probably counterproductive. Not only will it let the Andersen employees who committed wrongdoing escape punishment; it may prevent much-needed reform of the accounting industry as a whole.

By indicting Andersen, the Justice Department virtually ensures that no particular Andersen employee will get more than a slap on the wrist for his or her misdeeds. After all, prosecutors have finite time and resources. Even if Justice goes on to indict individual employees—and there are indications that such a move is imminent—the purpose will be to pressure them to testify against the firm in exchange for leniency, not to prosecute them directly. As Dennis Taylor, a former federal prosecutor and U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) lawyer puts it: "Government agencies try to go after big fish.... The firm is the prize here. Individuals are just stepping stones toward the big fish."

That's unfortunate, because a lot of Andersen employees seem to have done a lot of bad things. Start with Nancy Temple, Andersen's legal counsel, and Gary Goolsby, its global risk manager—who both just happened to remind Andersen employees of the firm's "documentation and retention policy" just days after discovering reams of documents implicating it in Enron's looming meltdown. Or take David Duncan, the Andersen partner in charge of the Enron account, who led the ritual document shredding at Andersen's Houston office and who had earlier fudged memos to conceal dissent within the firm about Enron's dubious partnerships. Or how about the as yet unnamed Andersen executives who, according to *BusinessWeek*, demoted the member of the firm's internal review board who most vigorously challenged Enron's bookkeeping? While these individuals may have committed their alleged misdeeds in a corporate culture that encouraged them, that doesn't mean they shouldn't be held responsible for their actions.

And the indictment doesn't only let individual miscreants off the hook; in a sense it lets off the whole accounting industry. Recognizing that, even absent indictment, it couldn't survive in its current form, Andersen had given former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker carte blanche to craft a radical overhaul proposal. Indeed, the Volcker plan threatened to bring the kind of reform that neither Congress nor the Bush administration was capable of imposing. Among Volcker's demands: dividing auditing, consulting, and tax-accounting practices into different firms; and rotating lead audit partners to prevent Enron-like chumminess from clouding objectivity. The rest of the accounting industry looked on in horror as Volcker labored to restructure Andersen, realizing that if Andersen began adhering to higher standards, market forces might eventually force Andersen's competitors to adhere to those standards as well. But now, thanks to the indictment, the major firms can sleep a little easier: Andersen won't be around to implement the Volcker plan.

Worse, Andersen's impending demise takes an already highly uncompetitive industry and makes it even more so. Once Andersen's numerous global practices are cannibalized by the other major accounting firms—a process that got underway with the recent merger of Andersen's Singapore office with Ernst & Young—the Big Eight accounting firms that existed as late as 1989 will have shrunk to four. And the auditing market is even less competitive than that number suggests. That's because, even before Andersen's collapse, the industry was segmented into submarkets over which each major firm exercised a near-monopoly. With Andersen gone, its financial services and energy niches will fall to firms that already control multiple submarkets.

All of which may explain why, in contrast with Andersen's loud protests, its competitors are surprisingly quiet about the firm's death sentence. From their perspective, Andersen's demise may be the best thing to happen to the industry in years. ■

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NOTEBOOK

CONSERVATION, KAREN HUGHES-STYLE: No smoking guns have yet been found among the 11,000 pages of documents that the Energy Department was ordered to release late last month. Which is partly because most of the pages are so heavily redacted that they are virtually blank. But lost amid the short burst of news stories that followed the document dump was one priceless dispatch by Reuters on March 29. The hallmark of the Bush political and communications shop, of course, has always been its ability to spin the administration's most conservative policies as centrist, or even liberal. Thus, for example, the administration's energy report—which called for a dramatic increase in domestic oil, gas, and nuclear energy production—was famously spun as a plan for environmental protection and conservation. But in this case it appears that the line between spin and reality was even fuzzier than usual, with the Bushies actually confusing their public relations offensive on conservation with actual conservation. How else to explain Reuters reporter Tom Doggett's discovery of some unscrubbed pages revealing that the administration paid to print 10,000 copies of its glossy energy report with $136,615 taken from the Department of Energy's solar, renewables, and energy conservation budget? Indeed, the conservation funding proved such a convenient kitty for the administration that it later took out another $1,317.39, according to Reuters, to produce "16 'briefing boards' used by administration officials to illustrate and explain the White House energy plan." Last year the White House had proposed cutting the solar, renewables, and conservation budget by 50 percent. But who knows? Having discovered how useful it can be, perhaps the Bushies will increase it instead.

ACTIONABLE: The class-action lawsuit craze reached a new level of ingenuity last week when a group of lawyers filed the nation's first legal action seeking reparations for slavery. The suit names three big corporations alleged to have benefited from slavery—FleetBoston, Aetna, and CSX—but does not specify damages. Which shouldn't come as much of surprise, since the suit itself is less a serious legal action than a ploy to make headlines. For proof, one need look no further than the op-ed penned in last Sunday's *New York Times* by Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree, who is planning his own "wide-ranging reparations lawsuits" against the federal government later this year. "Bringing the government into litigation," Ogletree writes, "will also generate a public debate on slavery and the role its legacy continues to play in our society. The opportunity to use expert witnesses and conduct extensive legal discovery, to get facts and documentation, *makes the courtroom an ideal venue for this debate.*" We add italics here to highlight the idiocy of this assertion. Has Ogletree never heard of a congressional hearing room? That, not the courts, is the ideal venue for this debate—an open, democratic forum that will not needlessly consume millions of dollars in corporate legal fees. And it's not as though no one's talking about such an approach. In fact what representatives such as Michigan Democrat John Conyers Jr. propose is just that: hearings—and for the time being only hearings—into whether reparations are justified and how they might be apportioned. If all Ogletree really wants is "facts and documentation" he should abandon his lawsuits and get himself a subscription to C-SPAN.

A SLIGHT ACHE, OR BEYOND IDIOCY: No figure in contemporary letters represents doctrinaire anti-Americanism more vehemently or more mindlessly than Harold Pinter. For a long time now Pinter has swanned

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Gas prices go up
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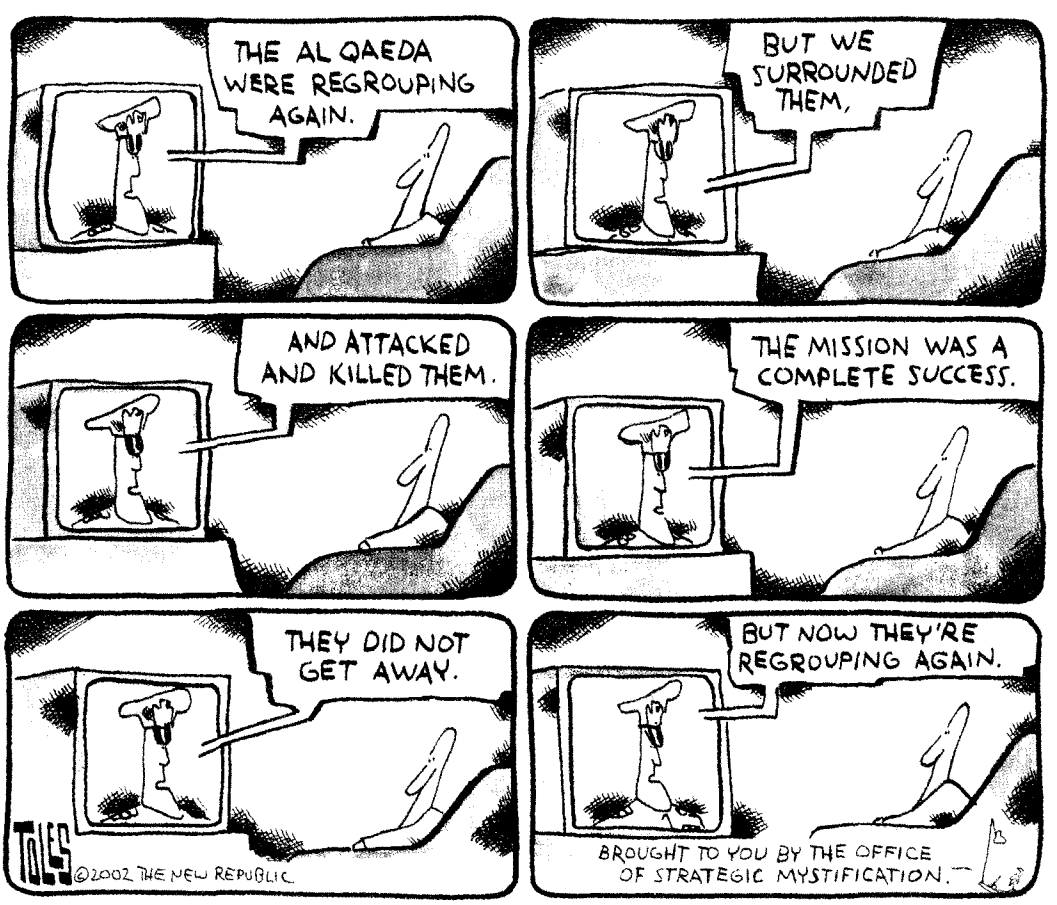
around capitals and conferences as some sort of intrepid dissident against the American hegemon, a valiant man of the people speaking truth to power from his table at the Ivy. It is not exactly a surprise that the inflamed climate after September would also inflame Pinter's anti-American inflammation, but he has surpassed himself. In the current issue of *Granta*, in an otherwise sane symposium of "What We Think of America," Pinter delivers himself of his view that the United States "is now the most dangerous power the world has ever known—the authentic 'rogue state,'" which "has effectively declared war on the world. It knows only one language—bombs and death." He doesn't have much to say about the American war against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, but he knows that the NATO war against the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo "was in itself illegal, a bandit act, waged outside all recognized parameters of International Law, in defiance of the United Nations, even contravening NATO's own charter. But the actions taken, we are told, were taken in pursuance of a policy of 'humanitarian intervention' and the civilian deaths were described as 'collateral damage.'" Pinter also declares that the American prison system can accurately be described as "a vast gulag—two million prisoners in fact—a remarkable portion of them black. Rape of young prisoners, both male and female, is commonplace. So is the use of weapons of torture as defined by Amnesty International—stun guns, stun belts, restraint chairs." Pinter's reflections about the United States put one in mind of that sentence in that Waugh novel: "'Fuck you,' he explained." The man may write like an angel, but he thinks like a North Korean.

BAD TO WORSE: When last we left GOP überoperator Grover Norquist, he had written a letter to TNR condemning as "partisan rantings" an article charging that he and protégé Khaled Saffuri, with whom he founded the Islamic Institute in 1998, had arranged White House meetings for pro-Hamas, anti-American Muslim activists (See "Fevered Pitch" by Franklin Foer, TNR, November 12, 2001). Now, however, it appears that the problems at the Islamic Institute may go a good deal deeper. (Norquist resigned as chairman of the board about two years ago, but maintains a close relationship; Saffuri recently resigned as executive director to become chairman of the board.) As *Newsweek*'s Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball reported on April 1, 2002, last month the FBI lifted computers and documents from the Northern Virginia offices of one of the Islamic Institute's biggest funders, the Safa Trust. (According to *Newsweek*, Safa gave Saffuri's group at least $20,000.) The FBI also raided the offices of the Success Foundation, whose board member Abdurachman Alamoudi also donated $20,000 to the Islamic Institute. Government officials suspected that both the Safa Trust and the Success Foundation have been conduits for cash to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Moreover, *Newsweek* revealed that both supposedly philanthropic organizations have transferred large sums of cash into obscure entities in the Isle of Man, a global center of money laundering. When *Newsweek* presented Norquist with evidence of the Islamic Institute's connections to these dubious interests, he cried "incompetent McCarthyism." We wish we could say we're surprised.


THE AL QAEDA WERE REGROUPING AGAIN.
BUT WE SURROUNDED THEM,
AND ATTACKED AND KILLED THEM.
THE MISSION WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS.
THEY DID NOT GET AWAY.
BUT NOW THEY'RE REGROUPING AGAIN.
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UMMM...: "It's not like there's an ongoing war in this country."—Dr. Sidney Wolfe, co-founder of Public Citizen, arguing that the bioterrorism expertise of surgeon general nominee Richard Carmona isn't relevant, the *Arizona Daily Star*, March 31 ■

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Why Bush can't moderate the GOP.

Off Center

By JOHN B. JUDIS

WHEN BILL SIMON JR. won California's Republican gubernatorial primary last month, it was widely viewed as an embarrassment for the Bush administration. The White House, after all, had publicly backed Simon's opponent—former Los Angeles Mayor Dick Riordan—on the assumption that the moderate Riordan stood the best chance of victory against incumbent Gray Davis in the overwhelmingly Democratic Golden State.

Some commentators were quick to deny any wider political significance to Riordan's defeat. Riordan lost, *The Weekly Standard*'s David Brooks argued, because "it wasn't clear he wanted to be governor." But Riordan also lost because California conservatives, including three former GOP state chairs, vociferously rejected his candidacy. His defeat reflects an ongoing national problem for Republicans: the unwillingness of state and local Republican organizations, which are still dominated by the unreconstructed right, to back moderate candidates even when they stand a better chance of winning in November. Last fall, conservative Republican nominees for governor—beloved by the grass roots but unappealing to the broader electorate—lost to centrist, relatively nonideological Democrats in New Jersey and Virginia. And that losing trend may continue this fall—not only in New Jersey and Virginia, but also in California, Illinois, Ohio, and even the president's beloved Texas.

To be sure, Republicans will benefit this November from George W. Bush's popularity, much of which stems from his conduct of the war against terrorism. And GOP candidates all over the country have undoubtedly received some boost from the public perception that Republicans are more trustworthy on military affairs than are Democrats. But foreign policy rarely plays a prominent role in congressional, statehouse, and gubernatorial elections (after all, Democrats won the gubernatorial races in New Jersey and Virginia a mere two months after September 11). And on domestic issues, the Bush administration has thrived in large part by adapting to a public climate that is not congenial to conservative Republicans. This climate is centrist, even center-left. That's why Bush has buried his commitment to privatize Social Security and signed campaign finance reform. It's why he junked Republican voucher plans and instead signed a big increase in education spending. And it's why, whenever possible, he avoids such conservative hot buttons as abortion, immigration, and affirmative action. It's also why Bush and his political guru Karl Rove have backed moderate Republicans like Riordan and Minnesota Senate candidate Norm Coleman.

If the GOP nominated moderates like Coleman all over the country, it could reap a harvest of victories in 2002 and 2004. The Bush administration's problem is that die-hard conservatives control most state and local party organizations and the bulk of legislative offices; they give most of the money to candidates; and they are much more likely to vote in GOP primaries. In a *Los Angeles Times* survey of likely Republican voters before last month's California primary, 75 percent of respondents called themselves conservative, while just 16 percent were self-described moderates. Needless to say, this kind of ratio doomed Riordan and will create problems for any candidate who hopes compete in a general election—and not just in California.

Consider what is happening in Illinois. Republicans have occupied the governor's mansion in Springfield since James Thompson defeated the old Daley machine's candidate in 1976, but that streak may well end this fall. Thompson and his successors have all been moderates (or even liberals) who appealed to suburban Chicagoans as well as downstate rural voters; Thompson even garnered the endorsement of the powerful state AFL-CIO. But this year conservative Attorney General Jim Ryan won an extremely bitter primary battle against moderate Lieutenant Governor Corinne Wood (who attacked him for opposing abortion and gun control) and extreme conservative Patrick O'Malley (who attacked him for once endorsing an ordinance banning job discrimination against gays). After the primary, Wood and O'Malley withheld their endorsements of Ryan, who will face Democrat U.S. Representative Rod Blagojevich in the fall. With Blagojevich well ahead in the polls, Rove, who had stayed out of the primary, has summoned Ryan to Washington for damage control.

IN OHIO, REPUBLICAN Governor Bob Taft is running for reelection. Ohio has been tilting Republican in the last two decades, but there have been recent danger signs—including Democratic victories in formerly Republican Dayton and Columbus, and a surprisingly close showing by Gore in 2000 in spite of his having abandoned his campaign in the state. To reach out to moderate and independent voters, Taft chose Columbus City Councilwoman Jennette Bradley as his candidate for lieutenant governor. It was a shrewd move: Bradley hails from the state's fastest-growing county, which has been trending Democratic over the last decade; she's also pro-choice. And Taft's decision echoed the kind of winks and nods that Bush has sent to pro-choice soccer moms over the last two years—choosing high-profile pro-choicers like Colin Powell to address the GOP convention in 2000, for example, and naming them to numerous administration posts.

But Ohio conservatives went ballistic over Taft's decision. Eleven organizations—including the Ohio Christian Coalition, Ohio Right to Life, and Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum—have called on conservatives to sit out the election. Stephen Hartkop, executive director of the Ohio Christian Coalition, says, "We think it is disenfranchisement of conservatives. We are saying why should we be supporting someone who runs counter to our views." (While the Christian right is weak in Washington, it remains strong in states like Ohio and Texas.) Taft remains the favorite against a relatively weak Democratic opponent; but if conservatives

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Wildlife, Too, under Siege in Zimbabwe

Terry L. Anderson is the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Executive director of the Political Economy Research Center.

Recently elected Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe has clearly indicated that he has no intention of respecting property rights or the rule of law. His "terror teens" have brutally killed innocent people, and his "land reform" plan demands that more than 20 million of the 23.5 million acres under private ownership be surrendered without compensation. He has sent his thugs into the hinterlands threatening farmers and pressing squatters to take over the land. Insecure property rights have left Zimbabwe's economy in shambles.

Mugabe's assault on private property has also taken a toll on wildlife, for without landowners there is no one to protect them from poachers. **Before Mugabe's attack on private property, Zimbabwe had demonstrated how wildlife could be privately protected.** The CAMPFIRE program, for example, championed by the World Wide Fund for Nature, allowed local communities to manage wildlife. Hence wildlife became an asset as villagers in communal areas profited from hunting and photo safaris. Elephant populations mushroomed and poaching plummeted.

Stimulated by growing demands for hunting and tourism, private landowners also got into the wildlife business by combining small ranches into single units called *conservancies,* encompassing thousands of acres. The Save Valley Conservancy, for example, put together over 850,000 acres for wildlife management and reintroduced rare species such as black rhinoceros and roan antelope. Throughout Zimbabwe, 64 percent of kudu, 63 percent of giraffes, 56 percent of cheetahs, and 53 percent of sable antelope and impalas were on private ranch properties.

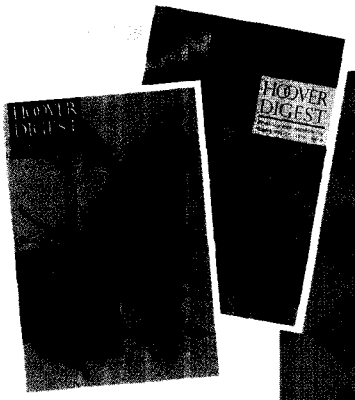
Unfortunately wildlife is under siege by Mugabe. Photos of mutilated animals in the February 2002 issue of *African Geographic* paint a sickening picture, and the statistics tell the rest of the story. To clear the land, squatters have burned more than 60 percent of the woodland on the country's three largest wildlife conservancies. The Bubiana Conservancy reports that 20,000 trees have been felled, 22 buildings razed, staff assaulted, and perhaps 50 percent of the wildlife killed. The Save Valley Conservancy reported more than 200 cases of poaching since August 2001 and the discovery of 5,677 snares. On the Chirendzi River Conservancy, where US$300,000 had been invested in improving wildlife habitat, 40 rare sable antelope and 200 large eland have been killed.

Poachers have also devastated smaller game ranches. Twenty-seven ranches in one region reported 2,761 animals killed and 26,292 snares collected. The value of animals lost is estimated at US$1.5 million. This value does not reflect the jobs—for whites and blacks alike—that will be lost as a result of the decline in wildlife populations.

The poor citizens of Zimbabwe cannot be blamed for trying to get their share of the land grab. **Mugabe has duped them into thinking that land redistribution without compensation or due process is the key to economic prosperity.** In fact, sustainable development will come only from stable property rights. Zimbabwe had previously shown the world how to balance economic development with conservation through private and communal ownership. Unless the sanctity of private property can be reestablished in Zimbabwe, its people and its wildlife will continue to suffer.

— Terry L. Anderson

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University



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don't turn out, this election—as well as several Ohio congressional races—could prove competitive.

Even in Texas, the cradle of the Bush presidency and (at least for the time being) no swing state, hard-right control of the state GOP could spell trouble for the party. As governor, Bush built a center-right coalition that included substantial Hispanic support—in part by keeping at bay the state's extreme right wing, which has always deemed W. a squishy moderate because of his support for public education. But Bush's departure has emboldened the hard-liners. In last month's primaries, Texas conservatives, backed by the state party chair, ran candidates against six incumbent Republican state legislators who voted for a hate-crimes bill. Texas's Free Enterprise PAC, funded by poultry king Lonnie "Bo" Pilgrim and other GOP magnates, sent out ads featuring photos of men kissing that accused the legislators of endorsing the "homosexual agenda." The right's candidates didn't win (although one came within two points), but the challenge has embroiled Republican Governor Rick Perry in a no-win debate about "the homosexual agenda"—exactly the kind of debate Bush successfully avoided.

Meanwhile, Bush's efforts to bring Hispanics into the GOP have been quietly abandoned. Take last month's Republican primaries: Popular incumbent Representative Henry Bonilla was renominated; but in contested Republican primaries for the statehouse and legislature, where only one Hispanic Republican currently sits, Hispanics lost all five of five races. By contrast, Hispanic Democrats, who currently occupy 32 seats, ran in 39 primaries and won 35 of them, including the primary for governor. With Hispanics now constituting 32 percent of the Texas population, Republican failure to woo them will be a bigger problem in every election to come.

TEXAS, IT'S TRUE, is an unusual case—a conservative state whose fast-growing Hispanic population could eventually put it in the toss-up category. But if Republicans in Illinois and Ohio want to see what happens when their party starts losing the upscale suburbs, they need look no further than New Jersey and Virginia. Indeed, last year's gubernatorial victories by Democrats Jim McGreevey and Mark Warner suggest the growing price the GOP could pay in swing states for the stranglehold of the hard right.

Take New Jersey's wealthy and populous Bergen County, just outside New York City. In 1988 it went for the elder George Bush over Michael Dukakis 58 percent to 41 percent; in 2000 Al Gore defeated the younger Bush there 55 percent to 42 percent. Likewise, in 1993 and 1997, Bergen County voted for moderate Republican Governor Christine Todd Whitman, but in 2001 it went for McGreevey against conservative Brett Schundler. And while moderate Republican Representative Marge Roukema—60 percent of whose district lies in Bergen County—managed to weather the pro-Democrat tilt (winning reelection by 65 percent to 30 percent in 2000), her successor may not be so lucky. State Assemblyman Scott Garrett—a conservative who almost defeated Roukema in the 1998 and 2000 primaries thanks to backing from the Christian Coalition, the Club for Growth, and the National Rifle Association—is now a favorite, along with another conservative, to win the nomination to succeed her. Laments Akram Yosri, a New York University business professor and one of two moderates in the Republican primary, "This is a moderate district. This has voted a moderate in for the last twenty-two years. But ... if you look at the Republican organization at the county level, it is dominated by conservatives." Anne Sumers, an ophthalmologist and Roukema supporter, found the Republican primary electorate so inhospitable to moderates that she decided to switch parties and run to succeed Roukema as a Democrat. Sumers is a first-time candidate, but she has already raised more than $200,000. She might have little chance against a moderate Republican, but she could defeat a polarizing conservative like Garrett. It's happened before in New Jersey: In 1998 Princeton Professor Rush Holt, a political neophyte running in what used to be a solid moderate Republican congressional district, ousted conservative incumbent Mike Pappas.

LIKE BERGEN COUNTY, the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., used to be Republican country. In 1988 the elder Bush won Fairfax County 61 percent to 38 percent, and George Allen and Jim Gilmore carried it in the 1993 and 1997 gubernatorial contests. But Bush fils barely won Fairfax in 2000; and in 2001 new Democratic Governor Warner carried it against conservative Republican Mark Earley. You would think the state's Republicans would be trying to woo Northern Virginia voters back; but, since Warner took office this year, they have done almost exactly the opposite.

Virginia law allows concealed weapons even in public buildings. In response to a shooting at a recreation center seven years ago, the city of Alexandria passed a law banning guns in public buildings, and Fairfax County has been planning to follow suit. But conservative Republicans in Richmond passed a bill this winter barring local governments from regulating gun use. Fast-growing Northern Virginia also suffers from traffic jams and overcrowded schools; but the state, reeling from a fiscal crisis, won't provide new funds. So Northern Virginia business and school groups have proposed a referendum that would allow the area's voters to raise local sales taxes to fund improvements in roads and schools. Under Virginia's constitution, however, Northern Virginia counties need state approval to hold the referendum. Warner and the Democrats backed the referendum; but this winter the Republican legislature said no. Republicans in the area are up in arms. Says Elaine McConnell, a Republican county supervisor in Fairfax, "I always considered myself a conservative Republican, but evidently I am not." One Republican elected official from Northern Virginia who didn't want to be identified thinks that Northern Virginia may soon suffer the same fate as Northern California's Bay Area, which, outside San Francisco, used to be dependably Republican but is now solidly Democratic. "That's a frightening prospect, because that's exactly what is happening to our party."

The Bush administration swallowed Riordan's loss in part because it realizes California is an unusually Democratic state that Republicans can afford to write off. But Rove and

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company can't let battleground states like Illinois and New Jersey become solidly Democratic and let solidly Republican states like Ohio, Virginia, and Texas become swing states. Yet, even as Bush's wartime popularity soars and Republicans rejoice about their chances this fall, that may be exactly what is happening. ■

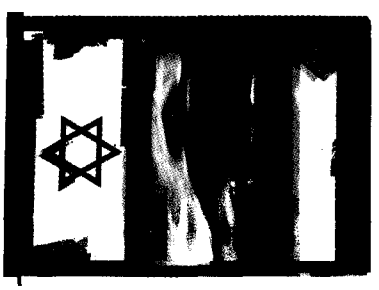
The limits of American influence.

Neutrality Act

By LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN

WHAT THE MIDDLE East really needs, according to a chorus of opinion-makers, is for the United States to intensify its efforts to mediate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Former Clinton national security adviser Samuel Berger insists, "We have to get engaged in this, not in simply admonishments and condemnations, but by putting some real effort here." Senator Joseph Biden demands that the president "step up his involvement," while *The Washington Post*'s Jackson Diehl characterizes the bloodletting as "a dangerous situation that, through timidity and willful inaction, the United States allowed to become a catastrophe."

Willful inaction? The Bush team may not be poring over maps to determine which side gets which street, like its predecessor, but inaction hardly describes its approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. That approach began with Secretary of State Colin Powell's trip to Israel one month after President George W. Bush's inauguration, and it has continued through the administration's adoption of the Mitchell Report; its dispatch of a special envoy to the region; speeches endorsing the establishment of a Palestinian state; detailed cease-fire proposals; regular security meetings; and a steady diet of carrots and sticks. True, Bush hasn't managed the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations personally, as Clinton did. But that's hardly unique to the Middle East. Bush, unlike Clinton, doesn't micromanage *anything*.



The real problem isn't that the Bush team hasn't intervened as much as the Clintonites; it's that even when they do, their efforts simply expose the limits of U.S. influence on the ground. That's because Bush must contend with three obstacles his predecessor did not. First, Ariel Sharon is no Ehud Barak. Second, Yasir Arafat the would-be martyr is no Yasir Arafat the Nobel laureate. And finally, unlike the Clinton team, the Bush administration has not one Israel policy but two—whose contradictions intensify precisely when its involvement does.

American pundits sometimes forget, but the success of U.S.-backed peace efforts in the Middle East depends on the consent of leaders in the Middle East. And while Barak satisfied the Clinton administration's requests to the point where his critics alleged he was jeopardizing Israeli security, Sharon has proven much more willing to spurn the United States when he thinks the interests of the two countries diverge. Hence, he refused to allow Arafat to travel to Beirut's Arab summit last week despite pleas from Powell and Vice President Dick Cheney. And just before Cheney's Middle East tour last month, he launched an earlier incursion into the West Bank in the face of White House protests. "The Bush administration seems to understand our constraints," noted a recent cable to Jerusalem from the Israeli Embassy in Washington, "and cannot understand why we cannot understand its constraints." In fact, as early as last May, Sharon brushed aside U.S. complaints about similar incursions into the Gaza Strip and about Israel's use of U.S.-made fighter aircraft against the Palestinians. Then, only days after September 11, Sharon refused a direct request from Bush that Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres be allowed to meet with Arafat. One month later he even invoked Munich, warning the White House not "to appease the Arabs at our expense." Sharon apologized but then dispatched forces back into Palestinian territory over the protestations of Bush and Powell.

"One of the lessons Sharon internalized after [Israel's 1982 invasion of] Lebanon was to avoid crossing Washington when possible," says David Makovsky of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, "but if Sharon believes U.S. policy is being driven by factors unrelated to the safety of Israeli citizens, a clash can be expected." For Sharon, one such factor happens to be the Oslo peace process, which he opposed from the outset. Moreover, while the international community considers him a warmonger, the threat to Sharon's political survival comes from the Israeli right—and particularly from Benjamin Netanyahu—which criticizes him for being insufficiently bellicose. "What he's always telling us," says a senior Bush administration official, "is that the government will fall apart if he concedes too much, too quickly." And Sharon's perception of the Israeli mood isn't far from the mark: According to a recent survey by Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, nearly half of all Israeli Jews support expelling the Palestinian population from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But if Sharon's victory over Barak has diminished America's leverage, so too has Arafat's victory over, well, Arafat. In the aftermath of the Clinton-sponsored Camp David talks in the summer of 2000, where Barak offered Arafat 97 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian leader reverted to pre-Oslo type—releasing terrorists from prison and encouraging the bloodletting that has continued ever since. In fact, Arafat proved as impervious to the Clinton team's entreaties to rein in the violence during its last months in office as he later would be to the Bush team's pleas.

When questioned in an Israeli TV interview last December, the Palestinian leader exploded, "who cares about the Americans?" Not Arafat. As one State Department official

ANASTASIA VASILAKIS

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puts it, "Every time we take a step in his direction, he takes another step back." In the past few weeks alone, Arafat has refused to issue a public appeal to end terrorist attacks in exchange for a meeting with Cheney and has rejected a U.S.-devised cease-fire proposal—a draft copy of which requires Israel to lift "all internal closures"; pull back to "its positions of September 28, 2000"; and cease "attacks on [Palestinian] security forces or institutions." (Sharon agreed.) In fact, the deeper the United States involves itself in the conflict, the worse Arafat behaves. Hence, he greeted U. S. Special Envoy Anthony Zinni with a wave of suicide bombers on the envoy's first trip to Israel. On Zinni's second trip, Arafat greeted him with a ship from Iran packed with 50 tons of missiles, guns, and mortars. The results of Zinni's third and ongoing trip are before us today. "Arafat has always used terror as a negotiating ploy," says Efraim Inbar of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, "and he is doing so once again because of a logic that is hardly responsive to American influence."

BUT THE PRINCIPAL reason the Bush administration can't intervene effectively in the crisis is that it can't make up its mind. Actually, it has two of them. And that's not likely to change. One, the "even-handed" approach, resides primarily at the State Department and is exemplified by Powell, Policy Planning Director Richard Haass, Assistant Secretary of State William Burns and his deputy David Satterfield, Ambassador to Israel David Kurtzer, and others. The other consists of the White House—where Cheney, his staff, and increasingly the president himself tout a line barely distinguishable from Sharon's—and the Pentagon, where officials like Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz have in the past taken an even harder line.

Every time the administration wades into the conflict, this schizophrenia becomes more apparent. Just two weeks ago, for example, the Bush team was characterizing Israeli military operations as "not helpful" and professing sympathy for Arafat. Last week, however, the White House lent its support to Sharon's much more ambitious offensive into the West Bank. But State Department officials claim that Powell's words on the day the offensive was launched, which seemed to endorse Israel's strategy, weren't his own: Rather they bore the hallmarks of Cheney, Rumsfeld, and their staffs, who weighed in on the substance of Powell's statement at the White House. In January the same factions split over the significance of the Iranian arms shipment to Arafat: Foggy Bottom publicly downplayed it, while Cheney and Rumsfeld proposed severing ties with the Palestinian leader. The two camps also repeatedly clashed over whether to dispatch Zinni to the region and over the content of Powell's November speech endorsing a Palestinian state.

The result has been a string of mixed messages. On the one hand, says Shmuel Sandler, a political scientist at Bar-Ilan University, "The State Department gives hope to the Palestinians." As Palestinian Authority minister Nabil Shaath has put it, Powell "is more balanced towards the Palestinian issue." (As for the president's admonitions that Arafat halt terror attacks, Shaath says, "I didn't think that the remarks of President Bush were really serious.") Indeed, State Department officials frequently deal with Arafat as if they were his case officers, stage-managing his condemnation of the September 11 attacks and soothing him with promises of Israeli concessions. And if the Palestinians listen only to the State Department, the Israelis tend to tune out Foggy Bottom completely. The State Department's Bureau of Near East Affairs has been loudly arguing for months that the satisfaction of Arafat's demands amount to a precondition for attacking Iraq. But as Israeli daily *Haaretz*'s Aluf Benn reports, Israeli officials believe the administration's focus on Iraq means "the new American involvement is cosmetic and should not be taken seriously." In fact, the Sharon government discounts anything that doesn't come out of the mouth of Bush himself. "Anything said apart from his tête-à-têtes with Bush personally," says Makovsky, "Sharon sees as background noise." As a senior Israeli official puts it, "The White House is what matters, and [Bush] understands the situation very well."

But with all these confused messages from Washington, it's not clear that either the Israelis or Palestinians understand Bush very well. Despite the efforts of Pentagon and some White House officials, the Bush team will never support Israel unconditionally. The cost abroad would simply be too high. But neither will the State Department's sympathies for the Palestinians become official policy. The political and moral consequences would be too much for the White House to bear. And, yet, so long as the Bush team remains split between two camps, its competing messages will continue to cancel one another out. In other words, greater U.S. involvement might lead not to greater coherence, but to louder incoherence. Which is exactly what the Middle East doesn't need. ■

Bethlehem Dispatch

Gen X

By ELIZABETH RUBIN

DAWN BROKE IN Bethlehem on Tuesday with the roar of F-16 fighter jets and the thud of heavy machine-gun fire, as Israeli tanks and armored personnel carriers rolled through the streets to seal off every neighborhood. At the Bethlehem Star Hotel, a five-minute walk from Manger Square, journalists and international protesters were drinking tea in the fifth-floor panoramic restaurant, peering out at the armored vehicles rumbling down the street. A shot rang out, and as the window shattered, a piece of glass lodged in the neck of an AL-JAZEERA correspondent. "Keep down," shouted a French photographer. "They are shooting anyone they see."

Indeed, at 7 a.m. downtown Bethlehem was declared a military zone, and anyone seen moving on the streets was

ELIZABETH RUBIN covered the war in Afghanistan for THE NEW REPUBLIC.

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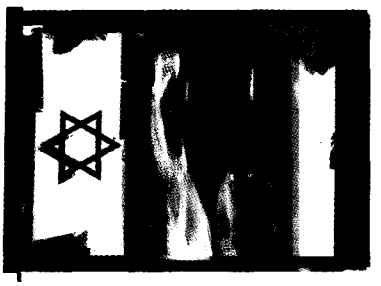
a target. A dozen or so Israeli troops could be seen running in the direction of Dheisheh refugee camp, a hotbed of Palestinian militants. A few minutes later, Richard Elias, the blond-haired, Palestinian-Swedish hotelier whose family owns the Star, received a phone call from his cousin. An elderly man had been found shot dead on a nearby street. "There is a martyr in Bethlehem," he announced. A little while later the next call came in. "The Santa Maria Church's been shelled," Elias reported, "and Father Jacques has been martyred." This latter rumor proved untrue, but the anxiety with which it was received was a testament to the mood all over the city. "Martyrdom" is on everyone's mind these days. Indeed, for more and more young Palestinians it is becoming a fervent aspiration.



A few days earlier I'd sat with other journalists in a living room in the Dheisheh camp—a warren of cinderblock and stone houses—talking with Shireen, a tall, 14-year-old Palestinian girl suffering the early stages of muscular dystrophy. The day before, her sister's 18-year-old best friend, Ayat Akhras, had blown herself up at the entrance to a Jerusalem supermarket, killing two Israelis—and thus securing her fame not only in Dheisheh, Bethlehem, and the West Bank but also, according to TV reports, across the Arab world. When we asked Shireen what she thought of Ayat's "martyrdom operation," she smiled. "It's great," she said in English, opening her arms. "It's sensational. Anyone would want to be in her place." Confident, articulate, wearing blue bell-bottom stretch pants and an olive-green chenille cardigan over her turtleneck, Shireen seemed almost high on the news of Ayat's courage. "If I had the means," she said, "I would have done it yesterday."

Shireen's father told her she is too young to become a bomber. When she grows up, he said, she can choose her own path. And so, with martyrdom not an option now, Shireen spends her time studying science and math and listening to Palestinian nationalist songs. "If I can't become a martyr," she said, "I want to be a doctor in a Palestinian hospital." When she insinuated that she would only treat Palestinians, her father interrupted. "You have been treated by an Israeli doctor. And my life was saved by an Israeli doctor in 1984 when I had a car accident. A doctor mustn't make distinctions between patients." And then he said to us, "You see, we're losing control of our children."

Ayat and Shireen are the cutting edge of the new intifada: secular, educated Palestinian teenagers who are joining the ranks of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. Whereas such attacks were once the province of religious extremists promised eternal paradise by fundamentalist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, increasingly they are motivated by simple nationalism—often combined with an element of generational rebellion and, in some cases, a kind of feminist pride.

The generational divide came through as clearly in a conversation with Ayat's father, Abu Samir, as it had with the

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father of Shireen. Abu Samir was clearly shocked by the news of Ayat's suicide attack, which he received from a TV report and which was confirmed when members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade saluted the family's sacrifice by firing their weapons in front of their apartment house. But while convention calls for a father to take pride in his child's martyrdom, Abu Samir was instead grief stricken. "I can't express my feelings," he said. Ayat was the best student among his eleven children, was expecting a scholarship to study journalism at Bethlehem University, and was engaged to be married in August. Abu Samir teared up as he showed us a portrait of Ayat that happened to be one of those studio photographs taken in front of a cityscape of lower Manhattan, the twin towers of the World Trade Center above her head.

LOOKING FOR SOME explanation for his daughter's decision, Abu Samir recalled Ayat's reaction to the death of their neighbor Issa Faraj just a few weeks earlier. "He was playing LEGO with his daughter when he was shot through the window," during the Israeli army's incursion in early March, Abu Samir said. Ayat's brother recalled, "When Ayat saw me and our cousin carrying Issa past the doorway, she screamed out in pain, and I told her to get back inside." On the living-room wall hung a reminder of another possible influence on the young Ayat: a large portrait of Mahmoud Mughrabi, a student of hotel management who was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in December 2000 while planting a bomb on a road that runs past several Jewish settlements near Bethlehem. (During the last incursion, the Israeli army demolished the homes of Mughrabi's brother and father.) But in the end, these explanations for Ayat's suicide attack didn't really make sense to Abu Samir. "I supplied [my children] with everything possible to have a decent life," he said. Nor does Abu Samir share his daughter's hatred of the Israelis. He noted that he is himself in business with an Israeli construction firm, building homes in the neighboring Jewish settlement Beitar Illit. "This phone," he said scrolling through his mobile's menu looking for the number of one of the Israeli employers, "is from the company. I worry about their children. They worry about mine."

But Abu Samir's view seems hopelessly outdated. The lure of dying in an attack rather than defenseless at home has an empowering appeal to many Palestinian adolescents, who've been politicized since the day they were born. For children and teenagers suffering the normal psychological problems of adolescence, martyrdom is also an instant way to gain love and respect. One teacher told me about her friend's son, a little boy who had begged his father to let him become a suicide bomber. When his father asked why, the boy said, "Nobody loves me or pays attention to me. If I die a martyr, I'll have my picture all over the walls, and everyone will know me and love me." Indeed, all day long, AL MANAR, the TV network of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, broadcasts graphic montages from the intifada throughout the West Bank, accompanied by inspirational martial and religious music. And every house is adorned with hagiographic posters and photographs of those killed in the uprising. "Up until now we haven't had a martyr below the age of seventeen," said Yahia Abdullaziz Dahajla, an English teacher in the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem. "But already in the fourth grade you have kids who are Fatah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine."

In recent months the aspiration to become a suicide bomber has become particularly prevalent among Palestinian girls, many of whom seem to take pride in proving themselves as brave, or braver, than men. According to Shireen's older sister Shukruk, the talk among girls at school has been about following the examples of Ayat's predecessors, Wafa Idris and Dareen Abu Aisheh, two women who blew themselves up earlier this year. "It's become a wish among many girls to go and execute suicide operations," she said. Vivian Khamis, a Palestinian professor of psychology and former chair of social sciences at Bethlehem University, describes the use of female suicide bombers as a natural progression of the intifada. "There's been a big change in the role of women in our daily life," she says. "Today women are the first to confront the Israeli soldiers at checkpoints and at home, because the men are hiding." The effect has been ironically liberating for Palestinian women. Khamis notes that Idris, a 28-year-old paramedic, was unpopular before her suicide bombing because she was seen as too secular—she wore makeup and perfume, and she was divorced. But Wafa's attack outside a Jerusalem shoe shop on January 27 had a major impact not only among Palestinians but also in the Arab world at large, where she was widely celebrated in the press. "Since last Christmas, the girls don't want dolls anymore as gifts," Khamis says. "All they want are guns and tanks."

Khamis was particularly awed by the video Ayat taped before her death. In it, she intoned: "I am going to fight instead of the sleeping Arab armies who are watching Palestinian girls fighting alone." Khamis noted that during the attack Ayat was so composed and determined that she quietly shooed away two Arab women selling their herbs outside the entrance of the Jerusalem supermarket. Five minutes later, she detonated.

THE AL AQSA Martyrs Brigade claimed Ayat as one of its own. Until January, Al Aqsa, the military wing of Yasir Arafat's Fatah movement, restricted its operations to ambushes and drive-by shootings of settlers and soldiers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, leaving suicide bombings to Hamas and Islamic Jihad. But now they are a secular phenomenon as well. "Even Christians are talking of martyrdom," Khamis says. Indeed, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade has even started a special unit for female recruits—unlike Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which forbid women from carrying out suicide attacks. (Asked about the prohibition, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, answered that for now there are plenty of men available but indicated that he would allow women to become bombers when the men ran out.) Dareen Abu Aisheh, an English student at Nablus University who was considered brilliant by her classmates, tried in vain to join Hamas earlier this year. After she was rejected, she joined the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and blew herself up when asked for identification at a checkpoint near Jerusalem, injuring three policemen.

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The day after Ayat's suicide attack, Dheisheh camp was nearly deserted. Israeli tanks were massing at the entry points to Bethlehem, and most of the residents had fled in anticipation of the expected onslaught. I saw Ayat's father in front of a bakery, leaving town in a beat-up car with a picture, taped to the windshield, of his daughter draped in a flowing keffiyeh and brandishing a pistol. In nearby Manger Square, gunmen from Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade milled about nervously, some of them dressed in full battle gear. "The difference between Israeli fighters and ours is that when they die, they cry. When we die, we celebrate," said one. He added that if Arafat is harmed or expelled from the country, the suicide bombers will rise from five or six per week to five or six per day. ■

Murdering Jews, then and now.

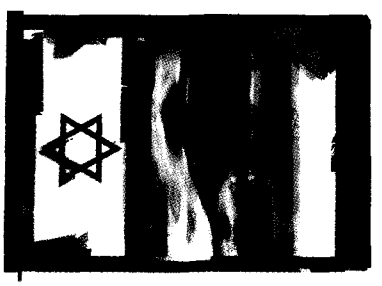
Killer Angels

By Martin Peretz

I don't remember when I first heard this Yiddish verse, written by an unknown poet in the Warsaw Ghetto. But I know I was then still a child, and its cadences have haunted me ever since:

In the Warsaw Ghetto it is the month of spring.
And full on the table stands Elijah's cup.
But who, to this seder, does ruin bring?
The Angel of Death, who comes to drink and sup.

We were preparing our seder at the New York apartment of one of our children when we heard the grim news that the angel of death had intruded on another seder, this time a communal one in Netanya, Israel, reaping a harvest of 25 dead. This macabre angel remained especially active in the days that followed; and one week later (when this article went to press), the number of Israeli noncombatants dead in other suicide killings had risen to 45, with the toll of the disfigured and injured climbing into the hundreds.



Theodor Herzl wrote that Zionism's twin goals were to allow the Jewish people to "live at last as free men on our own soil, and in our homes peacefully die." And Zionism has achieved the first: a democratic, modern, liberal society, curious, scientific, on the cutting edge of medicine, accountable, transparent, and extremely plural. (Whatever hardships Arab citizens of Israel endure, they are mostly attributable to the unremitting enmity to Israel of their cousins in the neighborhood; and they are, still, the freest Arabs in the region.) Still, the second goal remains elusive. The Jews of Israel still cannot be sure that they will be allowed to die peacefully in their homes. In fact, the angel of death has intruded on their ordinary civilian lives for more than one century now.

The killings of Jews by Palestinians—and, earlier, by Arabs who didn't yet consider themselves Palestinians—predated the establishment of the state of Israel. The killers did not differentiate among their targets. They just had to be Jews, random Jews, any Jews: socialist farmers on some remote kibbutz in the Galilee, working people in Haifa, or ultrapious (and, for that matter, often anti-Zionist) men and women from a town like Hebron where Jews had lived innocuously and continuously since several centuries before Mohammed set foot on this earth.

Nor, for that matter, is the specific phenomenon of suicidal murder altogether an innovation of contemporary Arab and Muslim fanatics. This has been a hot subject in historic Islam for centuries, and it remains so in the mosques and schools of higher Muslim learning today, pro and con. The widespread adulation of Al Qaeda and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, of Osama bin Laden and Yasir Arafat, of Mohammed Atta and the young man on his way to paradise because last week he perpetrated mass murder in Tel Aviv, is evidence of the deep roots that this practice has in the culture of the Arab and Muslim world. And let us name the phenomenon honestly. When pampered Saudi princes praise the "martyrs of Palestine," and when Arafat himself says (more than a bit insincerely) that he wishes to die a *shahid*, they are (as Shimon Peres has pointed out) countenancing the idea of human sacrifice as an active agent of modern politics.

It is particularly disturbing that Pope John Paul II seems not to have grasped this. And, in his Easter message "to the City and to the World," during which he enunciated that tired cliché that "no one can remain silent" about Israeli aggression, he found it quite easy to be silent about the Palestinians' now-habitual dependence on human sacrifice as tactic and strategy. Of course, Arafat is an old pal of the pontiff, having visited the Vatican almost as frequently as he visited Bill Clinton's White House. And there is a deep cynicism to the pope's moral equivalence between the premeditated murder admired and practiced by literally every flank and faction in the Palestinian polity and the unintended victims of Israel's rather scrupulous and, indeed, finicky war against terror (up to recent days, mostly the bombing of empty buildings).

Yasir Arafat, of course, has never been finicky about terrorism, and his long history on that score mocks America's calls for him to renounce the only craft he has ever truly known. Arafat's debut on the world stage coincides with the beginning of the Palestinian revolution, which, it is urgent to recall, commenced at least three years before the Six Day War. This means that Arafat started the Palestine Liberation Organization before one Israeli ever stepped foot into the West Bank or Gaza Strip—or, for that matter, prayed at the Western Wall in Jerusalem or walked in the city's ancient Jewish Quarter. There were no "occupied territories" back then, and there weren't really any disputed territories either—except in the heads of the Palestinians. What Arafat wanted then (and what I believe he still wants now) was to liberate not Hebron or Nablus or Gaza (which in 1967 were

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in Arab hands) but Haifa and Tel Aviv, the plains of Sharon, and the Negev desert. Or, as military historian Victor Davis Hanson put it in *The Wall Street Journal* this week, "the current Arab-Israeli war—at least the fourth fought since 1948—is fought over the West Bank: but that is only because . . . the Arab world lost the first three wars to destroy Israel proper."

From the beginning, Arafat's tactics of terror were audacious: blowing up airplanes in midair; taking children hostage in schoolhouses; skyjackings; hijacking of buses; shootouts and bombings in crowded airports, theaters, terminals, markets, beaches, restaurants, wedding halls. His most daring moment was during the 1972 Munich Olympics, in which eleven Israeli athletes lost their lives. (It was also the first moment when Peter Jennings showed himself to be oh, so understanding of Palestinian terror.) But this terrorism occurred only sporadically. It wasn't until the Oslo agreements and the handshake on the White House lawn that Arafat's terrorism became a routine feature of life in Israel. Israel obliged itself in 1993 to provide the Palestinian Authority weapons (augmented, of course, by the armaments the Palestinians smuggled and illegally manufactured themselves). And those weapons became the instruments of Jewish death. The closer the Israelis came to meeting Palestinian demands, the more intense the terror became. Suicide bombing, in fact, didn't become the Palestinians' chosen mode of day in, day out terror until the year 2000, when Israel offered Arafat more than the old butcher probably ever expected.

EVEN MY FRIEND Tom Friedman, generally much too credulous about Arafat's intentions, recently wrote that the Palestinian president and his compatriots "have not chosen suicide bombing out of 'desperation.'" The Palestinians, he says, were offered "a peace plan that could have ended their 'desperate' occupation, and Yasir Arafat walked away." He goes on to say that the Palestinians "want to win their independence in blood and fire," and that is because "all they can agree on is what they want to destroy not what they want to build. . . . Let's be very clear: Palestinians have adopted suicide bombing as a strategic choice. . . . This threatens all civilization because if suicide bombing is allowed to work in Israel, then, like hijacking and airplane bombing, it will be copied and will eventually lead to a bomber strapped with a nuclear device threatening entire nations."

If Friedman is right—and I believe he is—then the solicitude for Arafat expressed by so many world leaders is itself perilous. Prince Sultan, the Saudi defense minister, called the siege of Ramallah "the greatest crime in the history of humanity." Is he out of his head? The Lebanese president's bleatings on Arafat's behalf are more than a little hypocritical given his decision to prevent Arafat's speech from Ramallah from being heard live at the Beirut summit. As for the threat by Jordan's foreign minister, Marwan Muasher, to send the Israeli ambassador back to Jerusalem, he is playing an old, and silly, game. The Hashemites know all too well that Israeli intelligence is their first line of defense against their menacing Arab neighbors and that the Israeli military is their second. That has been clear since at least 1970, when the Israelis turned back Syrian tank divisions heading toward Amman. Israel guarantees Jordan's survival. The king and his Cabinet can express their "deep anger" at Israel's treatment of Arafat; but, in truth, he is a threat to them as well, and as such they wish him nothing but ill. King Abdullah and his advisers surely don't want Israel to give Arafat all the territories captured from them in 1967, and they were desolated when it seemed that Ehud Barak would do just that. They want the Jordan Valley in Jewish hands—as a buffer between emergent Palestine and their own country and also to prevent chaos among the West Bank Palestinians from spreading to the Palestinians in their own kingdom.

ARAFAT'S MOST SINCERE partisans are not in the Arab world; they are in the nations of Europe, whose leaders routinely threaten Israel with retribution when it seeks to defend itself. Some of this is domestic politics: European leaders must now cater to ever larger, and more militant, Arab and Muslim populations within their own borders (a fact that should give pause to Americans who wish to indiscriminately admit immigrants who would bring their old hatreds to their new home). In the diplomatic strutting of European states that once deployed real force around the world but now no longer can, there is probably also some nostalgia for empire. Who really cares, after all, what Belgium thinks about Israel's conflict with the Arabs? The European states and, for that matter, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan are structurally incapable of truly influencing events on the ground in Israel, the disputed territories, or the rest of the Arab world. They cannot produce a real concession from Israel because they cannot produce—and haven't—even a symbolic concession from the Palestinians. And, for all their patronage and nurturing of Arafat, he has never given them even a diplomatic crumb to take to Israel.

The European country that has hectored Israel the longest and most obsessively, of course, is France. And why should we be surprised? After all, President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's attacks on the Jewish state have accompanied a frightening intensification of anti-Semitism in France.

Then there is the left—like the people who went to be with Arafat inside his compound last week. These "progressives" are not a new phenomenon in world affairs: They and their ancestors have been worshiping bloodthirsty leaders for more than half a century. But with Stalin, Mao, and Castro, there was, for a time, at least a veneer of brutal idealism. Zionism was an expression of European liberalism, and there were Arab intellectuals who imagined that their nationalism also would be nurtured by that source. But, in practice, Arab nationalism has become a very nasty business, defined everywhere by dictatorship. Palestinian nationalism is no different. Arafat has no grand vision of human affairs whatsoever, no desire other than territory—and territory not as the seedbed for an inspired vision of community but as a launching pad for war against the Jews.

Arafat could not possibly have stirred these activists' dreams of a just society, because he has none. His scant program contains not even the deceit of egalitarianism. Arafat is

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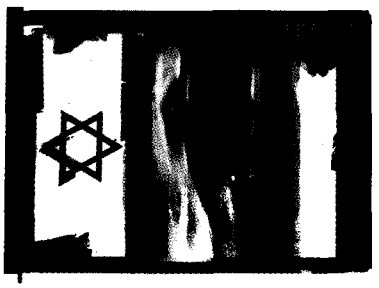
a fascist, and his fascism has at its very core the hatred of Jews. And since he is unabashedly stirred by this passion, one has to suspect his admirers as well, all of them (including—if I am permitted to go local—the three Episcopal bishops of Massachusetts and their political adviser, a priest in a Cambridge church, who in their preaching and protests seem to think that innocent Jewish life is without value). In France, already, synagogues are being burned and cemeteries trashed. And in Israel, amidst a rage of daily terror, a young Palestinian came to the seder door and murdered 25 men and women, one pregnant with two children in her belly, never to see the light of day. ■

The first Palestinian-Israeli war.

After Peace

By Leon Wieseltier

The Arab-Israeli conflict is over half a century old, and the struggle over the precious, punishing land between the river and the sea is over a century old, but what we are now witnessing, with perfectly appropriate horror, is the first Palestinian-Israeli war. It is, in important respects, an asymmetrical war. Israel is a state and Palestine is a proto-state; Israel has a powerful military machine and Palestine has a powerful terror machine. But on the battlefield of legitimacy, of the right to statehood in this particular place, the Israelis and the Palestinians are evenly matched; and the relative military weakness of the Palestinians has not prevented them from sending an unprecedented shudder through Israeli society, and from committing unspeakable crimes. The Palestinians also possess a variety of military organizations: The savage campaign of Palestinian terror is only a part of the armed resistance to the Israeli occupation that is the real innovation of these terrible days. For the first time since the creation of Israel, the Palestinians are fighting for a Palestine in Palestine. They have understood what Israel grasped a long time ago: that all the Arab-Israeli wars were fought by the Arab states not for Palestine but against Israel. This accounts for the strange exhilaration that the Palestinians express about their own tribulations, for the spirit of apocalypse in which they are acting, for the costly illusion that they are attaining something by war that they could not have attained by peace.



As of this writing, 1,229 Palestinians and 408 Israelis have perished in this war. The disparity between those awful numbers is a reflection of the military superiority of Israel, and also of the political folly of the Palestinians. If it is the sovereign state of Palestine that they want, they could have gained it more than once without the tears. The Palestinians are mounting armed resistance against an occupying power that for a quarter of a century has been divesting itself of territories that it is occupying, except not in a manner that will damage it or destroy it. To be sure, there are Israelis who believe that the return of any of the territories would damage or destroy Israel; but those Israelis have failed to persuade the majority of their countrymen that their pessimism or their jingoism is correct. It is the fears of the Jewish settlers that have a basis in reality: not only because they now find themselves in an extraordinarily perilous position (even Ariel Sharon proposed a security buffer that would have left them on the insecure side), but also because they have recognized that they are not the obstacle to a diplomatic solution that they planned to be. In Camp David in 2000, these outposts of piety and vulnerability were no impediment at all; the negotiations broke down over the Palestinian right of return, when Palestinian leaders again shirked the choice between their desire for a state and their desire for their grandfather's house. And a few days after the suicide bombing in Netanya, after the slaughter that made that night different from all other nights, *Yediot Aharonot* published a poll that reported 66 percent of the Israelis supporting the dismantling of all the settlements in Gaza and 70 percent supporting the dismantling of settlements in populated Palestinian areas. No, this Palestinian war for Palestine is a gratuitous war. Those 1,637 deaths are the direct consequence of Yasir Arafat's cowardly decision to leave Palestine in his cabin at Camp David. He chose *this*.

Instead of Palestinian diplomacy there is Palestinian delirium. This people that demands sovereignty is utterly without sovereignty over its passions. It prizes its passions more than it prizes any politics. It regards a cease-fire, a respite from the carnage that would make possible a resumption of negotiations, as a defeat. It is acting on a doctrine that might be called strategic death. The suicide bombers (who would be known more precisely as homicide bombers, but for the fascination that such perversion provokes) believe that death is a strategy for winning a passage to heaven. Their masters in Hamas believe that death is a strategy for driving the Israelis out of the territories and maybe even out of the Middle East. Jews "love life more than other people," a senior Hamas official told Lee Hockstader of *The Washington Post*,

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"and they prefer not to die." The love of life he regards as a weakness. In recent weeks the internecine struggle between Palestinian secularists and Palestinian theocrats seems to have been resolved: the radicals of Fatah, the revolutionaries who defiantly preferred manifestos to surahs, have also taken up the techniques of suicide bombing. They are all jihadists now. The methods of Hamas were adopted by Fatah for the most chilling reason. They discovered that it was necessary to retain their political credibility. They pander to their people not by establishing schools and clinics. They pander to their people by blowing themselves to bits.

The revered Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish was visited at the end of March by a delegation from the International Parliament of Writers, who came to express their solidarity with the Palestinians. When they asked him why he does not write about the present conflagration, Darwish replied: "I know that the masters of words have no need for rhetoric before the eloquence of blood." He then proceeded to deliver the usual writerly sermon that "our task, as humans, is to humanize history"; but the moral comeliness of the master of words was rather compromised by that single sickening sentence, by his agreement that there is beauty in murder. "The eloquence of blood": Whatever else such a locution is, it is a treason against literature. (The writers also visited Yasir Arafat in Ramallah, where Jose Saramago declared that "though there are differences of time and place, what is happening here is a crime that may be compared to Auschwitz. They are turning this place into a concentration camp." If this is Auschwitz, an Israeli reporter asked, where are the gas chambers? Saramago replied: "There aren't any yet.")

THERE IS MORE, much more. In *Time* magazine last week, a Palestinian psychiatrist published an explanation of this mass hatred of life, sweetly called "Why We Blow Ourselves Up." It is one of the most twisted things that I have ever read. The doctor wishes to show why the collapse of reason is reasonable. "Ours is a nation of anger and defiance," he instructs. "The struggle today is how not to become a suicide bomber." He remarks, without a syllable of alarm, upon "a desire for revenge that every Arab harbors." He cites the Koranic promise of eternal life in paradise to those who sacrifice themselves for Islam, and comments that "Muslims, men and women, even secularists, hold to the promise literally." With clinical authority he maintains that "in every case of martyrdom there is a personal story of tragedy and trauma." This psychological alibi is then buttressed by an affecting anecdote: "A curious journalist once asked me to introduce him to a potential martyr. When the journalist asked, 'Why would you do it?' he was told, 'Would you fight for your country or not? Of course you would. You would be respected in your country as a brave man, and I would be remembered as a martyr.'"

The doctor is sick. His explanation is itself a clinical document. Anger is not a great human accomplishment, even when it is a condign response to events. All Muslims do not take the fairy tales of religion literally. Does every Arab harbor a desire for revenge? Then the Israeli right is right and there is no hope. Also there is a difference between heroism and martyrdom. A hero is somebody who risks everything for what he believes. A martyr is somebody who risks nothing for what he believes, because he believes that his reward is certain, and that his life really begins with his death. Martyrdom, unlike heroism, is an extreme and repugnantly rigid expression of certainty. Martyrs make dogmas, heroes make wagers. But here is Arafat in Ramallah, raving on AL-JAZEERA that he wishes to die like a martyr. Since he returned from the Catocin Mountains with nothing for his people except an interest in street battles, the chairman of the Palestinian Authority has resorted frequently to the theological vocabulary of holy dying. Surely the aspiring martyr cannot be relied upon to restrain the other aspiring martyrs. In truth, martyrdom is nothing but the sanctification of failure. It transforms losing into winning, so as to make winning—in this instance, the victory of a normal life in a state alongside another state with a normal life—seem like a surrender, a betrayal, a concession to the evil world. The martyrs of Islam resist the evil of the world by adding to its evil.

The Palestinians understandably wish to determine their own lives, but nobody ever built a life out of the hatred of life. Moreover, the love of life is not a failing. It is the source of an ennobling ferocity. Happiness can make people strong. If Hamas believes that Israelis love life too much to fight for it, then Hamas is making a spectacular mistake. Israelis may not want to die for Netzarim or Beit El, but they will not have the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv and Haifa and Netanya stained with their own blood. Israelis can find a way to settle with the Palestinian fight for Palestine, but they cannot find a way to settle with the Palestinian fight against Israel; and a great deal of the recent Palestinian violence is of the latter kind, animated by a fantasy of extirpating the Jewish state. Against that violence and that fantasy the Israelis will vehemently defend themselves.

The manic materialism of Israeli society in the 1990s did not disarm it. Quite the contrary. The support that Ariel Sharon has enjoyed in Israel in recent months is not owed to a broad enthusiasm for a Greater Israel. It is owed only to the sense that he is a man of force and that this is a time for force. Sharon dreamed for a long time of becoming the prime minister of his country, but he never fulfilled his dream until Arafat fulfilled it for him. It was Arafat, and his preference of the "Al Aqsa intifada" over the accommodation with Ehud Barak, who brought Sharon to power; and it is Arafat, and his complicity in the massacres of the innocents, who keeps Sharon in power.

AND THAT, TOO, Israel may eventually hold against Arafat. For Sharon is weirdly devoid of a political imagination. He is just a big fist. He sees only military problems and only military solutions. He is correct in his view that terrorism is the immediate and intolerable threat (at the Arab summit in Beirut, the president of Syria declared that there was no significant difference between military targets and civilian targets, that "[w]e cannot divide whether they are armed or not. It is a right to resist"), and that it must be met with vicious and overwhelming force. But what then? When

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the infrastructure of Hamas and Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and the Tanzim and Force 17 has been undone, what then? The Palestinians in their multitudes and in their rights will still be there, unannexable and (Jews, remember who we are!) unexpellable; and the Israelis in their multitudes and their rights will still wish to exist in peace and in decency in their homeland.

Soon there will come a day, hard as it is to imagine while Palestinians detonate themselves at Israeli checkpoints and there is a siege in Manger Square, when work will have to resume on the only moral and practical answer that there has ever been to this question: partition, territorial compromise, a two-state solution, the establishment of a Palestinian state in most of the occupied territories with security arrangements in the Jordan Valley and identity arrangements in Jerusalem. Sharon's ancient hostility to peace agreements will make him unfit for such work. Anyway there is no guarantee that the work will bear fruit: It has been tried before. Indeed, the present war is so heartbreaking not least because it feels like it is occurring "after peace." So far the handshake on the White House lawn has yielded crushingly little. But this nightmare cannot go on. Well, no, it can go on; but it is a matter of the most solemn historical responsibility to try to stop it. Nobody should be asked to resign themselves to such excruciations, to call such torments a destiny.

AND YET AT this moment it is the unreality of diplomacy that is so striking, not only the necessity of diplomacy. The Saudi "peace plan" is certainly an exercise in cynicism. After September 11, when the consequences of the Saudi way of life were visited upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Saudis have been desperate to change the subject, and they found willing allies in a dizzy American journalist and an American administration keen to be disembarrassed about its affection for the regime in Riyadh; and so with great excitement it was revealed that Crown Prince Abdullah had discovered the principle of land for peace. In an act of extraordinary courage, the leader of the kingdom threw all his prestige and all his power behind the proposition that the world is round! The principle of land for peace, of course, is 30 years old, at least in Israel. Egypt has been enjoying its blandishments for decades. But where was Abdullah in, say, the summer of 2000, when his support for land-for-peace might have helped to bring about an actual exchange of land for peace? And Abdullah's principle of land for peace must not be mistaken for the principle of territorial compromise. The prince had the temerity to cite Security Council resolution 242, when his insistence upon the return of all the land that Israel captured flagrantly contradicted that resolution. He also had the temerity to lecture Israel that it "must put its trust in peace after it has gambled on war for decades," as if Israel captured the territories in any war other than a war for its survival. He also preached a great deal about justice, which was risible.

The Israelis will negotiate an Israeli-Palestinian peace only with the Palestinians: This has been an axiom of Israeli diplomacy for decades, and it has been vindicated by the durability of the "separate peaces" with Egypt and Jordan. Abdullah's pan-Arabism is a reactionary trick. Yet the Bush administration quickly kindled to its good friend's ploy, notwithstanding the fact that the only thing that its good friend accomplished in Beirut was a reconciliation with Saddam Hussein. It is getting harder and harder to be Dick Cheney. But then the administration's Middle Eastern policy is another timely illustration of the unreality of diplomacy. I refer not merely to the darkly comic figure of Anthony Zinni: Israelis may be forgiven if they mistake the poor general for the angel of death, since all that happens when he appears on the scene is that people die. No, what is unreal about American policy is its smug and stubborn Cheneyism, which is the view that the United States can ally itself with Israel as if there is no Saudi Arabia and ally itself with Saudi Arabia as if there is no Israel.

IT IS IMPORTANT to understand that this contradiction is not the inevitable price of our energy policy; we can devise a different energy policy. Nor is it a necessary conclusion of geopolitics: Saudi Arabia impedes American strategy as much as it assists American strategy. The remarkable thing about Cheneyism, the proof that its roots go deep in the culture of this government, is that it was not at all rattled by the attacks of September. The haven that Osama bin Laden and his Arab gang found in Afghanistan allowed the administration to pretend that the campaign against terrorism is a Central Asian campaign. But the anti-Americanism of the men who killed 3,000 Americans is a wholly Middle Eastern poison, whose cultivation is one of the Saudi regime's (and the Egyptian regime's) methods for persevering in power. All this Cheneyite winking at these two-faced tyrants is not only bad policy; it is also disgusting policy.

It is an old conviction of radicals that the worse things get, the better. The Palestinian radicals, secular and religious, share this conviction. It was one of the great contributions of liberalism to demonstrate the cruelty of such a view. But now those who would make the peace, or at least unmake the war, must rely on the same belief. They, too, must hold that hell will lead to heaven; or if not to heaven, then to a dispensation significantly more humane than what is now to be found on this scorched ground. But how different can the morning be from the night? The latest chimera is the notion that the introduction of American troops will make the difference. In support of this notion, the barometrically interesting Thomas L. Friedman observed in *The New York Times* that "Palestinians who use suicide bombers to blow up Israelis at a Passover meal and then declare 'Just end the occupation and everything will be fine' are not believable." This is just another way of saying that no moral or political demands may be made of the Palestinians of the sort that may be made of the Israelis. The Palestinians, you see, are civilizationally disadvantaged. But surely they are not. Surely they may be expected to recognize what is wrong with suicide bombings, and more generally with historical action founded on rage and despair. There is no reason for foreign soldiers to spare the Palestinians the pangs of autoemancipation. Otherwise no peace will ever be real. Otherwise the morning will be forever like the night. ■

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CITIZEN MAN

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Honesties

ISABELLE HUPPERT'S NEW film is set in Vienna, though all of the cast are French and speak their own language. This sort of contradiction, common in American-made pictures, is more noticeable in foreign films. The screenplay is based on a novel by an Austrian, who apparently wanted to keep the film version in Vienna, so the contradiction was inevitable, because the director would not make the picture without Huppert. Yet this difference in language is the least of the work's anomalies. Huppert plays Erika Kohut, a forty-ish piano teacher at a staid conservatory. She is distinguished in her work, lofty in her standards, strict. Yet in the course of the story we see her do these things:

- She visits a porno shop and in a viewing room watches a split screen showing four explicit sexual acts;
- She sniffs tissues left there by the previous (male) occupant;
- In her bathroom, she reaches under her nightgown with a razor blade and incises herself so that she bleeds;
- She grapples sexually with a male student of hers in a toilet, then tells him that she will write a list of demands that he must follow if they are to have sex;
- She prowls around a drive-in theater, discovers a couple copulating in a car, and squats next to the car to urinate in excitement;
- One night she suddenly leaps incestuously on her mother in the bed they have long shared.

There is more of this general kind.

The film is **The Piano Teacher** (Kino International), which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Cannes festival last year. I have placed some of the oddities at the start so that there would be no need, after suggesting the picture's considerable worth, to clear the figurative throat and concede those oddities. It is more helpful, I think, to examine the film in this strange light.

The strangeness is fixed early by Huppert herself. The director, Michael Haneke, was right to insist on her for the role. Sexy iciness has been Huppert's forte ever since *The Lacemaker* (1977), but here it is more than an actor's specialty. It is a temperament essential to the character, all the more so because of the sorts of actions that often erupt through it. This is no facile Jekyll-and-Hyde portrait, two persons in one body: Erika is one person, whole. All her actions are hers, consciously and—though she is usually discreet—unashamedly.

Haneke adapted the screenplay from a novel published by the eminent Austrian author Elfriede Jelinek in 1983. (In 1998 she was awarded the Büchner Prize, the highest German-language literary award.) I have seen two previous films by the German-born Haneke, *Code Unknown* and *Funny Games*, the second of which was signally cruel. As *The Piano Teacher* began to unfold, I thought it was going to be another Haneke special, but the new film is in all senses so much more complex that it almost seems as if Haneke had been honing his characteristics in order to use them for more than shock, to delve into the seriously dark and discomfiting.

Jelinek's book treats a Vienna that is stuffy in its Mozart-Schubert pride but is roiling underneath. The piano teacher truly believes in classical artistic ideals, yet she is crammed with private hungers. This contrast is of course not exclusive to *alt Wien*: it is part of the discontents of civilization that were explored by an earlier Viennese. But for Erika the term "discontent" is too mild. Her taciturn agon is so keen that it appears almost to produce a kind of resentment at being alive—a hatred of having to go through all the troubles of living, and a compensation for the bother with secret malice and sexual seethings.

Haneke's directing style is cognate with Jelinek's prose. Here is the book's opening (in an English translation by Joachim Neugroschel):

> The piano teacher, Erika Kohut, bursts like a whirlwind into the apartment she shares with her mother. Mama likes calling Erika her little whirlwind, for the child can be an absolute speed demon. She is trying to escape her mother.

This plainness, one sentence plunked down after another, is thus quickly revealed as a transparent disguise for much that curls and swirls beneath.

Haneke, too, begins with that scene. Erika has come home from the conservatory three hours late. Mother and daughter quarrel over the lateness and about the dress that Erika bought in those three hours. Haneke puts this quarrel in such a bald, vulgar manner that, since it takes place between a mature woman and her elderly mother, it suggests the strange state of emotional matters in this house. Something out of the ordinary is lurking here. Then the film slides forward, probing into the most secret of fantasies, realizing them—in Jelinek coolness—without exclamation.

In that first scene Huppert herself promises us a woman whose surface is both true and a mask, a promise that she fulfills stunningly. As her mother, Annie Girardot, so deservedly loved in so many films, is here enclosed and mean, strategic yet vulnerable. Benoît Magimel, as the hulking student who is also a scientist and an athlete, is accomplished in more than virility.

There is much music, of course, which is managed so cleverly that Huppert and Magimel convince as pianists. One of Haneke's stylistic devices is an analogue to music. Sometimes he holds the camera for a moment on a setting after or before a character leaves or enters. It is like a rest in a score, emphasizing what precedes or follows. A grateful bow to Christian Berger, whose camera distills several centuries in some of the conservatory shots and, in other places, catches the present tense—or a tense present. All those involved have created a film whose blistering candor will linger.

In a film dealing with another sort of candor, the cinematography is inadequate. **Y Tu Mamá También** (IFC), a Mexican film, was shot (by Emmanuel Lubezki) in a number of lovely places, but it merely records them without much visual zest—which is a pity, because zest, of another kind, is the point of the picture's being.

And from the start. In the first scene an adolescent boy and girl, nude, are boffing away feverishly in a Mexico City apartment. Then we meet another pair, friends of the first two, who are soon similarly busy. In their way the girls are saying goodbye before they leave for a vacation in Italy. The boys, though they are fond of their sweethearts, do not linger long in loneliness. They meet a young married woman in her twenties, and with a great show of innocent intent, the three set off by car for a holiday at the beach.

Wisps of other subjects float through—

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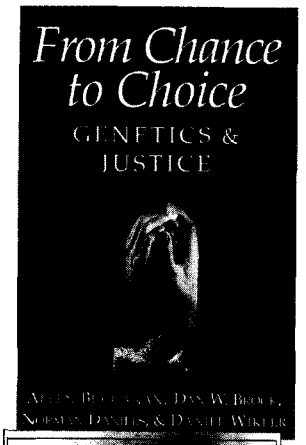

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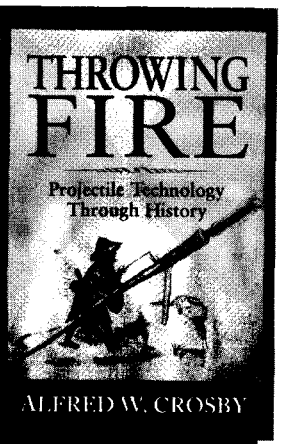

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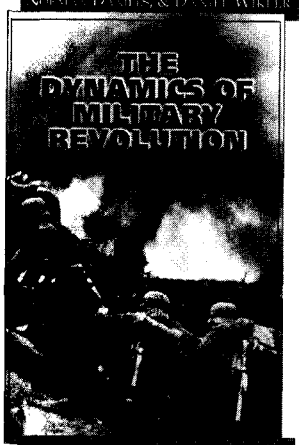

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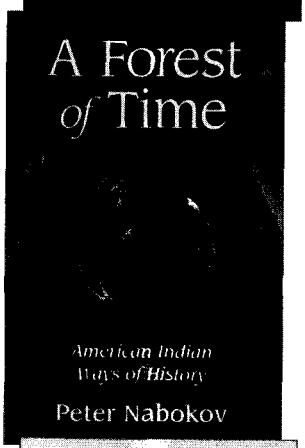

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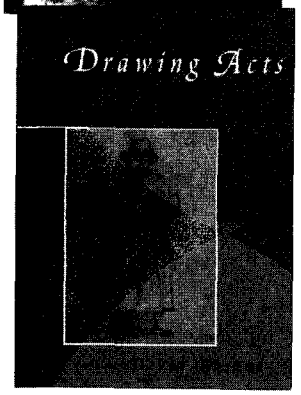

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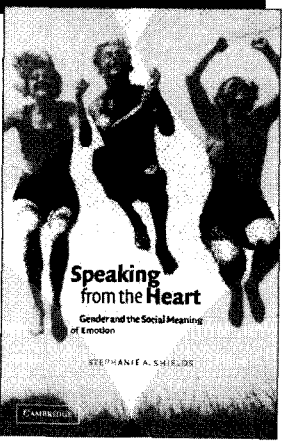

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the smell of hardships in the countryside, the beauty of the landscape, even an encounter (slightly patronizing) with a very prole fisherman and his family. But the core of the film is honesty, about that legendary physical mating, the adolescent male and the older woman—except that here there are two adolescents and the woman is only in her twenties. Still, Dionysus is in command, and they all live ideally in sex for a while. The boys need and get some procedural refinements from the woman, but it is fireworks time.

The two boys, Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna, fizz and subside, fight and embrace and fizz again, with exactly the right teenage set of hot reactions. Maribel Verdú, the young wife, has the figure and the appeal to fill her role. Alfonso Cuarón, co-author of the screenplay with his brother Carlos, has directed with empathy and wit and perhaps a helpful touch of envy. An epilogue two years later puts the seaside escapade in pleasantly nostalgic perspective, except that one fact, not to be revealed here, changes some of the sheer abandon we have seen into a tug of desperation. ■

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Audience, or Who Is the Goat

The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia (John Golden Theatre) may be another episode in Edward Albee's collection of shaggy dog (shaggy goat?) stories. Or it may not be. I had a number of contradictory responses to this play in the course of its intermissionless hour and a half, all of them cunningly machined by the playwright in his most mischievous mood.

Albee is famous for his theatrical sleight of hand (the gun that turns into an umbrella in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the baby who proves to be an illusion in *The Play About the Baby*). *The Goat* may be the first Albee play in which the very structure of the work is an act of prestidigitation. With the dramatist pulling one theatrical trick after another out of his conjuring hat, you leave the theater uncertain whether you have seen a conventional Broadway adultery drama, a sex comedy on the subject of bestiality, or a Nietzschean attempt to transvaluate our values about what constitutes "normal" behavior. No matter how you approach this theatrical object, it is prepared to resist any easy classification or snap judgment.

The elusiveness begins with the opening scene. When the lights come up on a typical late-Albee set by John Arnone (interior-decorated living room, Eames chairs, African sculptures, tiers of bookshelves, geometric fractured ceiling jutting into the house), Stevie (Mercedes Ruehl) is arranging flowers in a bowl. She is greeted by star applause. So is Bill Pullman, the actor playing her husband, Martin, when he makes his first absent-minded entrance and proceeds to mumble harmless small talk about his failing memory. The dialogue, the scenery, the circumstances, the stars, and especially the obligatory applause are all comforting indications that nothing in this evening is going to mar your enjoyment of a traditional domestic comedy.

Ruehl and Pullman, two extremely poised actors, proceed to reinforce this illusion with well-timed exchanges, by turns loving and acerbic, compassionate and witty. Not only is Martin's short-term memory prematurely going (he has just turned fifty); all of his senses seem to be failing. A Pritzker Prize–winning architect, Martin is about to be the subject of a retrospective interview with Ross (Stephen Rowe), a television journalist. The fact that Martin's interviewer is coincidentally his oldest friend and closest confidant is another reassurance that no unruly breezes are going to muss the carefully arranged hair of this Broadway pompadour. "Let them think they're seeing *Mary, Mary*," Albee once said to the cast of *Everything in the Garden*, an earlier attempt to subvert the moral and aesthetic assumptions of his audience. And for the first twenty minutes of *The Goat*, we seem to be watching, if not *Mary, Mary*, then certainly its contemporary equivalent in vacuousness.

It is not long, however, before the evening transgresses into Joe Orton territory, building its humor on the infinite varieties of sexual misbehavior. One of the conventions of this genre is that the audience must always be one step ahead of the characters. And the majority of people with tickets to *The Goat* surely come to the theater aware of the secret that drives the action—namely, that Martin has fallen madly in love with a goat, who, we eventually learn, is just as wild about him. (She looks at Martin with her wet eyes and nuzzles his face with her snout.) This animal is named Sylvia, after Valentine's love in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The subtitle is only one of many references to Shakespeare's famous paean to her ("Who is Sylvia, what is she,/That all our swains commend her?"), except that in this play the "what" is more important than the "who" and the swains are of a different species.

It eventually dawns on you that the crucial question of the play is not who or what Sylvia is, but who or what the actual goat is. It may be us. Albee certainly spends a good deal of energy upending theatrical expectations and conventions, partly through cross-references and self-references, such as a mention of a big girl named Alice—"Large Alice?" asks one of the characters—nodding toward one of the author's most famous titles. (By morbid coincidence, Irene Worth, the extraordinary actress who originated the part of Tiny Alice, died on the night *The Goat* opened.)

Ross eventually wangles Martin's secret from him: that this immaculately faithful husband has been having an affair. But not until the double entendres about Sylvia's identity have been allowed to accumulate exponentially does he learn who "she" is. Martin hands Ross a photograph of the creature that has captured his heart, leading to the blackout line of the first scene: "This is a goat . . . you're fucking a goat!" The same line is Stevie's opening salvo in the second scene of the play. Ross has blown the whistle on Martin to his wife, who, along with her gay son, Billy (played by Jeffrey Carlson), must now begin to process the information that her husband, "a decent right-thinking liberal generous man . . . right now appears to be fucking a goat."

Albee is obviously not the first to dramatize this kind of relationship. In Woody Allen's *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)*, Gene Wilder had a thing for a sheep, which he kept, dressed in garter belt and panties, in a hotel room until his wife stormed in with a photographer. But that was a single episode in a movie. *The Goat*

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is a full-length play, and the witticisms that Albee proceeds to squeeze from the same idea are numerous enough to be tedious. Stevie is told it was best for her to hear about Martin's bestiality from a dear friend. "As opposed to what?" she asks. "The ASPCA?" She admits to failure in that "I am a human being. I have two breasts. I walk upright. I give milk only on special occasions." She detects an odd smell on her husband: "Your mistress's perfume?" When Martin confesses that his passion for Sylvia sent him to a therapy group, Stevie inquires whether it was called "Goatfuckers Anonymous." As Pullman hangs his head in shame, Ruehl fires off a series of verbal fusillades so forcefully and explosively that she seems to be staking out the role of Martha (a part that she has already played) in the next revival of *Virginia Woolf*. (Indeed, the way Ruehl begins to smash every priceless object in the house after each of Pullman's incriminating revelations is itself a masterly course for actors in how to time stage business and handle props.) Once again demonstrating that he is most eloquent speaking through the mouth of an angry woman, Albee seems to have settled in for an evening of linguistic pyrotechnics, making the play an occasion for Stevie to vent her rage and express his wit. Having begun with a preposterous premise, Albee appears to get carried away in an endless stream of invective about how preposterous it actually is.

But just when you are beginning to wiggle impatiently in your seat, Albee surreptitiously, subtly, slyly manages to shift *The Goat* from a sex comedy about bestiality into a wrenching examination of what Lionel Trilling once called "passion love." It was in the course of analyzing Nabokov's *Lolita* (which Albee adapted to the stage) that Trilling observed how amorous emotions directed toward a forbidden sex object can often be more powerful than "normal" feelings among consenting adults. Martin's unbridled passion for a goat, like Humbert Humbert's uncontrollable lust for an underage girl, begins to take on the dimensions of a *grand amour*. It represents the spiritual bond, though sexual in nature, that exists between animal and man. That theme is implicit in this exchange: "It isn't about fucking" (Martin). "Yes, it is.... It's about you being an animal" (Stevie). "I thought we all were" (Martin). Completing her demolition of every plate and art object in the house, Stevie bangs out the door, shouting: "You have brought me down, you goatfucker, you love of my life."

I believe that Albee is attempting to make tragedy out of what is usually treated by many (including him) as a dirty joke. In the final scene he almost succeeds. Talking to his gay son, with whom he has not been communicating very well, Martin admits that he has only been in love twice in his life, "with your mother and Sylvia." After Martin confesses his fear that he and his wife have killed each other, the father and son hug, and the son kisses his father on the lips. Martin recoils, but later reveals to Ross, who saw them kissing, that he once had an erection holding his baby son on his lap. The conventionally minded Ross is appalled ("Is there anything you people don't get off on?"). But in failing to see that forbidden erotic longings can be described but not circumscribed by moral judgments, Ross turns out to be the villain of the piece.

In a shocking entrance Stevie returns, dragging a corpse behind her in a sheet. It is the body of Sylvia, whom Stevie has killed "because she loved you." Martin is in deep grief. All he can say is "I'm sorry." And the remarkable thing is that we are sorry too—some of us, anyway—to see this limp prop on stage, this mock-up of a beloved dead animal. After all the double entendres and domestic raillery and broken crockery and contrived plotting, Albee has managed to squeeze some tragic emotions out of the love of a man for a goat.

I think this play reaches the Miltonic

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goal that Albee failed to achieve in *The Man Who Had Three Arms*. It manages to justify the ways of "deviant" man to God. Racine did a similar thing in *Phèdre* when he set out to evoke sympathy, and generate pity and terror, out of a passionate woman's "criminal" love for her stepson. That Albee realizes this through the agency of a smoothly produced and sharply directed (by David Esbjornson) Broadway comedy makes his achievement all the more impressive. *The Goat* is far from a great play. But it is a play that sneaks up on you, shakes you by the shoulders, and demands your reluctant respect. ■

A tour through the wreckage of the Soviet empire.

Trashcanistan

By STEPHEN KOTKIN

I.

IN WASHINGTON, THE tenth anniversary of the Soviet collapse in December 1991 passed virtually unobserved. Once upon a time, like almost yesterday, Moscow served as the organizing framework of American foreign policy, and even of American domestic politics. Yet today's Russia has come to seem utterly peripheral—distracting for its nukes and poison gas, but supposedly ignorable, with a GDP (estimated at $350 billion) that is no more than the total fraud in the American health care system (and considerably less than the latest proposed Pentagon budget). True, the tragic rediscovery of the outside world by the accidental president—the media handle Bush's non-gravitas the way they handled Roosevelt's legs—induced the pundits to crow, again, about American "partnership" with Russia. But Washington under this administration hardly pays any mind to its formal allies. Partner with an ostensible basket case such as Russia, when NATO does not merit a single mention in the State of the Union address?

Yet consider that Washington has already fulfilled a long-held Kremlin fantasy of ejecting the Taliban and re-installing in Kabul the bulk of the Northern Alliance (whose multiple divisions manipulative neighbors find enticing). At a minimum, this turnabout means a rise in obscenely profitable transit "taxes" on the shipment of opium and heroin across Russia. And there is more. The revived American pipe dream of developing and shipping Turkmenistan's gas across Afghanistan remains a non-starter—no more feasible now than under the Taliban; but the United States might well go after Saddam Hussein, and the sooner the superhawks topple him and re-open Iraq for outsiders (at zero cost to the Russians), the bigger will be the smiles of the cynically protesting Vladimir Putin and the independently powerful Russian energy lobby.

Russia's current trade with Saddam's regime is a pittance, stuck in the twilight zone of sanctions. But Kremlin vaults hold contracts with Baghdad—they were inked in the late Soviet era—for the development of Iraqi oil reserves, not to mention promissory notes for an $8 billion Iraqi debt to Moscow, all presumably valid under a successor regime, courtesy of the Americans. Back in Soviet times, apparatchiks used to joke when queried about American subversion: who needs the CIA to sabotage the Soviet economy when you have the State Planning Commission? Kremlin wags now have a new one: who needs the Russian FSB (the successor to the KGB) when you have Paul Wolfowitz?

Is this the new new world order? A unilateralist American administration figleafing itself with a simulated "coalition" against terrorism, and a shrewd Russian administration reaping the collateral benefits? Yes and no. Putin found common cause with the United States on terrorism, pointedly declaring his support for "the West," but he often means Europe and especially Germany (big-time consumers of Russian oil and gas), and his "Western" strategic orientation came without renunciation of Russian commercial interests in Iran (or China, India, and the Korean peninsula). Our pundits heard what they wanted to hear. They also remain masters of the sideshow—perhaps the silliest aspect of their interminable debate about NATO expansion is the idea that such expansion matters, either for Eastern European security or for U.S.-Russian relations, which will pivot (or not) on economics.

On that score, Putin and his circle are waiting for the American administration to live up to its free-market fundamentalism. Moscow expects that Russian companies will be permitted to sell their substantially less expensive military hardware to an eager South Korea and to new NATO members, sales that thus far have not exactly been encouraged by the Bushies. Moscow further hopes that the American government will award Russian companies windfall contracts in the chimerical pursuit of a missile shield. And the Putinites seek Chinese-style access to the American domestic market, and thus an end to tariffs and the White House's manipulation of anti-dumping laws that shield American businesses against Russian competition in steel and shit (fertilizer).

So far, though, nothing's doing. Putin and much of Russia's elite are all *biznes*: for them, national greatness derives not from territory and tanks but from GDP. But they face obstacles, albeit misunderstood ones. The mammoth Soviet-era defense and security complex inherited by Russia is still jammed full: the empire vanished, but every pre-1991 office is occupied by a general or an admiral busy subverting desperately needed military reforms even as he ruefully condemns the American seizure of the initiative in re-arranging the strategic map of Inner Asia. Putin has not pressed for what no Kremlin leader could readily pull off—a radical overhaul of the military and security apparatus; and so he watches it decay (which is one type of long-term "reform"), and promotes mediocrities and pits them against each other, while using their loud stomping of sour grapes to demonstrate his own "reasonableness." More troublesome is the contradiction that he and his impressive (by contrast) cast of economic modernizers face between the need to promote political stability, for the sake of a predictable business climate and their own maintenance of power, and the need to deepen structural reforms against powerful interests, which can foil changes and provoke instability.

As for the Bushies, they know that Russia is an energy Goliath, with a transformed oil industry already capable of substituting for Saudi Arabia—on top of being the world's superstore for doomsday weapons. Yet White House politicos do not know how long they can or want to sustain the current global campaign in which

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Russia has been acknowledged as (temporarily) useful. Such a moment of unrealized opportunities—with half the Kremlin begging for business and arms deals while the other half mourns imperial "loss," and with Washington stumbling in search of a "homeland" defense that is somehow not encompassed by "national" security—seems a fitting time to take inventory of the entire post-Soviet space. And so I invite readers to a tardy tenth-anniversary-of-the-collapse "package tour," a comprehensive circuit by means of selected books. What emerges from such a tour is the outline of a subtle strategic shift, thus far independent of American policies.

FIRST, SOME PRELIMINARIES. The Soviet Union was congenitally illiberal, plagued with divide-and-rule malignancies and guilty of crimes that few other states could rival; but the post-Soviet Union has been, for most ordinary people, one step forward and two steps back. The Soviet empire's crack-up was not an overseas decolonization. Seventy million people (one in four) resided outside their national "homeland," if they had one at all; and countless families woke up to find that their relatives, and sometimes their own children, lived not some distance away but abroad, making separation permanent unless one pulled off a tricky apartment barter with others who were similarly blindsided, or gave up everything to start over as an immigrant.

Economic interdependence meant that even potentially profitable enterprises nose-dived when they were suddenly cut off from suppliers and customers in what became foreign countries, with different currencies and convoluted rules, or non-rules, for foreign exchange. Politically, independence has often resulted in still more arbitrary rule. When the Soviet Union was dissolved, it was replaced by... the Soviet Union, only with more border guards, more customs posts, more "tax" collectors, more state "inspectors"—in short, more greasy palms outstretched. Estonia stands out as the great bright spot (approaching the level of Slovenia, the star in East-Central Europe). But elsewhere around the former Soviet Union, we see a dreadful checkerboard of parasitic states and statelets, government-led extortion rackets and gangs in power, mass refugee camps, and shadow economies. Welcome to Trashcanistan.

Let us be clear. Readers should look elsewhere for yet another wrongheaded slam of the market. What brought about today's widespread poverty was not "reform," but the near complete absence of the neo-liberal reforms, and behind that the long-drawn-out planned economy, which in addition to a non-market incentive structure and corruption produced powerful social constituencies and other facts on the ground that were utterly inimical to reform. But another cause of the ongoing misery, I think, is the idolatry of "national" self-determination—usually attributed to Wilson, but equally attributable to Lenin—which continues to wreak havoc across the globe, as it did throughout the Cold War.

Although each case for a nation-state may appear just, and although those who have already achieved statehood may seem in no position to deny the same to others, "national" self-determination is too often a recipe for Trashcanistan—for systemic malfeasance and economic involution, with convenient cover for the worst political scoundrels and their legions of apologists ("Sure it is a criminal regime, but it is *our* criminal regime"). By contrast, self-government within an existing entity—or, better yet, an enlarged entity—where citizenship trumps ethnicity constitutes an altogether different proposition, especially when borders are open and markets are greatly broadened. What the European Union has been struggling mightily to transcend, the newly independent states of the dismembered Soviet Union have inflicted upon themselves.

The ironies here are exceptionally rich, for among the many causes of the Soviet state's demise, the most widely cited—I mean nationalism—was one of the least salient. If deep-seated nationalism brought down the multinational Soviet Union, as the analytical herd asserts, then what accounts for the profound post-1991 weakness of the nations and the nationalisms in almost all the successor states? A part of the answer is that they, too, are multinational. And equally important, of course, was the circumstance that when the Communist Party, which alone held the federal union together, underwent "reform" and disintegrated, the Soviet Union's internal Leninist nation-states became perfect vehicles for elite self-preservation and self-aggrandizement.

Consider further that despite the analysts' long-standing repudiation of the existence of a "Soviet nation," something funny confronts a traveler crisscrossing the former empire today: he encounters Sovietness at almost every turn. (Analysts had scoffed at the notion of a genuine East German identity, too, until post-reunification showed otherwise.) What should have been apparent from the Russian-speaking Jews who left the Soviet Union for Brighton Beach—transporting and freezing a 1970s moment of Soviet culture—is no less clear from today's Russian-speaking populations in most of the newly independent states, as well as the self-declared additional Trashcanistans within them: the various post-Soviet nations emerged deeply Soviet.

CENTRAL ASIA'S NEW STATES: INDEPENDENCE, FOREIGN POLICY, AND REGIONAL SECURITY
by Martha Brill Olcott
(U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 202 pp., $19.95)

HIGHLANDERS: A JOURNEY TO THE CAUCASUS IN QUEST OF MEMORY
by Yo'av Karny
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 436 pp., $15)

THE MOLDOVANS: ROMANIA, RUSSIA, AND THE POLITICS OF CULTURE
by Charles King
(Hoover Institution Press, 303 pp., $39.95)

UKRAINE: THE SEARCH FOR A NATIONAL IDENTITY
edited by Sharon L. Wolchik and Volodymyr Zviglyanich
(Rowman & Littlefield, 310 pp., $35)

RETURN TO THE WESTERN WORLD: CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ESTONIAN POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION
edited by Marju Lauristin and Peeter Vihalemm
(Tartu University Press, 387 pp.)

EMPIRE: THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND ITS RIVALS
by Dominic Lieven
(Yale University Press, 486 pp., $35)

II.

MARTHA BRILL OLCOTT'S important book on the new Central Asian states covers a vast amount of ground, most of it barren. It remains the best succinct overview of the "stans," focusing on foreign policies and showing that independence arrived like a natural disaster. "Up until the last minute," Olcott writes of the twister of 1991, Central Asian elites pursued greater power but not responsibility, and "were willing to compromise continually with Moscow" to salvage the Union. When they were "effectively chucked out of the USSR," these newly independent states found themselves, like most of their brethren, with provincial elites, few of whom had ever been abroad. Key KGB

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records were in Moscow, Olcott further explains, leaving Central Asian states no way to check who among them was, or is, a spy. (One deputy prime minister for newly independent Kazakhstan served a year in that post, resigned on a Friday, and on Monday surfaced in Moscow as a deputy prime minister for Russia.)

Amid such uncertainty, Central Asia's native elites quickly rediscovered a very Soviet appreciation for plebiscite dictatorship and plunderable state-controlled economies. Their repression and their looting failed to impress most foreign analysts, who continued to cheer on nonexistent "democratization" and market "reforms." In fact, only tiny, rural Kyrgyzstan implemented liberalization; but that remote country found its textbook policies trumped by a poor institutional inheritance and a worse neighborhood. Liberalization dangerously reduced Kyrgyzstan's state capacity, rendering the authorities unable to interdict armed Islamists (incubated by the Americans, the Saudis, and the Pakistanis in Afghanistan and civil-war-torn Tajikistan, and fleeing crackdowns in despotic Uzbekistan). A reversal of policy soon put Kyrgyzstan more in line with its autocratic neighbors, but it remains less dictatorial or closed than the region's other extreme, which is Turkmenistan. In short, Central Asia's five autocracies vary considerably in their nastiness, but they all have very unsure processes of political succession, which gives the lie to their claims that either hard or soft authoritarianism brings "stability."

GEOPOLITICALLY, MOST outsiders and even many insiders initially assumed that Central Asia's dual Turkic and Persian heritage, and its proximity to East Asia, would bring about a shift; and indeed formal separation from Russia did attract other meddling foreigners, sometimes government representatives, often just freelance adventurers. But as Olcott explains, "fifty years of [czarist] Russian rule, followed by seventy years of Soviet domination, decisively isolated the Central Asians from Turkey and Persia." Turks and Iranians seeking to "build a bridge" to the region gave up, finding local business practices too corrupt. A Korean conglomerate built a major auto plant, but China became the biggest of the new trading partners, even though fears of Chinese "imperialism" have kept Central Asians wary. Attempts by the "stans" to play an "Islamic card" came up blank: seven decades of Soviet rule went a long way toward extirpating religious Islam among the masses, and Saudi Arabia showed little interest in having its pockets picked by Sovietized secular elites who did not want mass re-Islamification.

Who then? Russia! The devil-we-know re-emerged as the region's key economic partner and, in Olcott's words, "the only predictable ally," vital for regional security. The "common heritage" with Russia proved to be not only the most recent layer of the region's experience, but also the strongest. When different Central Asians gather, Russian is the language that they speak, and Soviet officers of Slavic descent still occupy many command positions in the "national" armies. Even the telephone system used by Central Asian governments remains the Soviet one. Olcott further demonstrates that regional energy resources cannot be developed without cooperation from Moscow and the big private Russian companies (which in turn rely for technical assistance on the big Western firms).

Regional worries over the narrow pockets of underground Islamism—here is where Saudi money did turn up—has ensured Russia a further foothold, but readers poised for a warning about Russian neo-expansionism are in for a surprise. Olcott does see an expansionist threat, but from Uzbekistan, the most populous "stan" (with 25 million people, most of them young), which has co-nationals and covets territory in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. Uzbekistan's leadership, she argues, has defined the "Islamist threat"—which had emanated from Afghanistan but is rooted in local injustice and repression—very broadly as a rationale for authoritarianism and "defensive" expansionism. (The principle of maintaining current borders, however artificial, is a must for the entire former Soviet space.)

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Elsewhere Olcott has written that radical Islam will persist even though the bases in Afghanistan have been uprooted, because recruitment for the Islamist movement is guaranteed by Uzbekistan's refusal to countenance any organized Muslim piety (and thereby be in a position to regulate its finances). Although estimates of Uzbekistan's political prisoners generally exceed the number of radical Islamists by ten to one, Olcott notes that there are fewer and fewer "moderate" mullahs. And when Uzbekistan's secular Soviet-era generation of police and security forces retires, it remains to be seen what the mentality of their new-generation replacements will be. Thus, Uzbekistan's perverse promotion of Islamism by means of persecution poses a threat not only to its own people but also to the entire region. In the meantime, the basing of a small contingent of American forces has been perceived by the Uzbek regime—which resembles the Soviet-style Afghan regime that the United States helped to overthrow—as a unique opportunity to modernize its military quickly and at someone else's expense.

With a wary eye on Uzbekistan, Olcott argues, tiny Kyrgyzstan and gigantic Kazakhstan have sought to stabilize relations with Russia, which for its part prefers to reap regional resources without again being burdened with responsibility for local government and social welfare. "In many ways," Olcott concludes, "Moscow's new rulers treat the Central Asians more harshly than did Soviet rulers of the recent past." Instead of subsidies or set-asides for Central Asians in Russian universities, the locals get hard-currency bills and periodic reminders of who wields the strategic leverage. Most Central Asian states have "coordinated" their foreign policies as well as their militaries with Moscow, while struggling to extract benefits in exchange.

Future Central Asian elites are likely to be less Russified, Olcott points out, but they will still be neighbors of Russia, and the United States cannot do much about that—a conclusion that she reached before September 11. Yet if, as seems evident, the Americans do not intend to take the place of the approximately twenty thousand Russian Federation soldiers (mostly ethnic Tajiks, by the way) who are guarding Tajikistan's rugged borders and enforcing a delicate peace among warlords, or of Russia's Slavic troops guarding Turkmenistan's borders, and if—as seems probable—the Central Asians will continue to distrust each other, then any American role is likely to be complementary to Russia's role, despite the zero-sum hysterics. That goes doubly for the development of Caspian oil and gas, however much ultimately proves recoverable (think something closer to the North Sea than the Persian Gulf). So this is point number one: Russia remains, and will remain, a major presence in Central Asia—and indeed, as we shall see, throughout the former Soviet lands.

III.

Talk of Russia's southern reach and of an Islamist threat invariably touches upon the Caucasus. Yo'av Karny's highly original book is the most engaging of all the works under review in this essay. It is also the saddest. Karny spends the bulk of his time in the southern mountains of the Russian Federation, in the North Caucasus. "This is a book about the spirit of mountain dwellers," he romantically suggests, but really it proves to be about their squalor. He calls the highlanders "unyielding practitioners of liberty," but most of his stories revolve around aggressive ignorance, a persecution complex, maliciously manipulated "memory," hostage-taking, smuggling, and the "tradition" of inter-generational blood retribution. In 1918, during the chaos of the Russian empire's collapse, some idealists formed the Mountainous Republic of the Caucasus, uniting people on the basis not of religion or ethnicity but habitat and way of life; but this fledgling republic, which sent a "delegation" to the Paris Peace Conference, quickly collapsed. In 1990, as Karny writes, efforts to try to resurrect it "went nowhere." He tries to offer hope, suggesting that "some form of regional unity may yet be the destiny of the Caucasus." Alas, the book offers evidence to the contrary.

In some ways Karny has written another account of the Chechens, whose "tale," he notes, "more than any other, inspired me to write this book." An accomplished Israeli journalist sensitive to tendentious portrayals of Muslims, and a person who sympathizes with the peoples whose plight he comes to know, Karny agonizes a good deal, writing that the Chechen war "has taken so many ugly, bloody, and cruel turns as to exasperate even the most devoted friends of the Chechen cause," but also that "the astonishing courage and audacity that this small nation displayed, and the improbable, unprecedented victory that they scored in 1996, have left me in awe time and again."

He never directly addresses the question of why Moscow feels compelled to uphold its right under international law to defend its sovereign territory—in a criminally vengeful and self-defeating way—but he answers the question anyway, quoting the first Chechen president, Jokar Dudayev:

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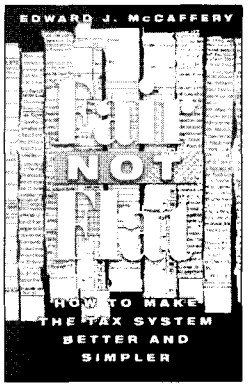

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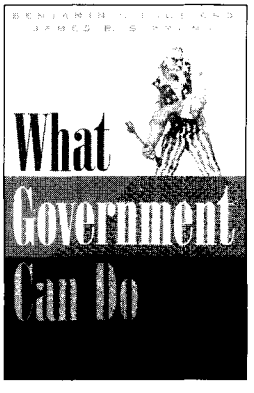

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> I need this situation [the war] more than Russia does.... What would I do if the Russians suddenly pulled out? I've got 300,000 men, aged 17 to 50, homeless, jobless, embittered and with nothing to do. All they can do is fight. I need a little war and an enemy to send them to battle against.

Chechen warlords, who issue their official documents in Soviet-inflected Russian, get their weapons mostly from the Russian army—perverse sales stemming from the destitution of Russia's conscripts as well as from the corruption of Russia's higher command.

Regarding the truce and the three years of de facto independence between 1996 and 1999 that brought additional misery to Chechen civilians (as well as to international aid workers), Karny retells the old saw of the "good" revolution "hijacked" by outside agitators—in this case, Arab militants (financed by Saudi money), whom he also blames for a return to war. In fact, a handful of militants did take advantage of Chechnya's anarchy, but political gangsterism was widespread well before 1996, and it was a status-craving Chechen warlord who, in the summer of 1999, did precisely what Dudayev and others had long vowed to do: press further into Russia and ignite a wider war. This they got, along with further pointless death, refugees, and Russian atrocities. Deciding that the Chechens "need some constructive criticism of their own flaws," Karny blurts out to one of them: "For two centuries you have been dying and dying and dying. Hasn't the time come to start living?" So this is point number two: armed "struggles" for "national liberation" can be seductive, but they turn out to be vastly less charming on firsthand inspection, and even when they are "victorious" they fail miserably.

Having written, partly against his own inclinations, perhaps the most devastating portrait of the Chechen "cause"—complementing the more numerous deserved indictments of Russian responsibility and conduct—Karny pushes onward to some of the least visited parts of the Caucasus. He relates stories of the "Circassians," a much spread out, sub-divided, linguistically related group of peoples who are "united," as it were, in his empathetic travels. The vignettes, mixed with historical background, are deeply humanizing.

Yet the many peoples whom Karny classifies as Circassians cannot communicate with each other except in Russian, and they speak with nostalgia for the Soviet Union. Karny, by contrast, declares that "there is no single group in the Caucasus that does not deserve its place in the sun." Here we have the archetypal Trashcanistan logic, and a formula for ceaseless manipulative warfare in a region rendered extremely diverse precisely by the highlands, which impeded the sausage-making of national "simplification," and by the Soviet political reification of nationality.

Visiting Kabardino-Balkaria, an "autonomous" republic inside Russia—which he aptly describes as "the same backwater satrapy that its Soviet predecessor was"—Karny reports that some Balkars want to secede. "An outsider could be forgiven for thinking that the Caucasus has gone out of its mind," he admits. "One might wonder: Who needs a Balkar republic on top of this ethnic mélange? Well, the Balkars may need one." Oh, really? Which Balkars, exactly? The ordinary people? And what kind of "republic" might they get? A Balkar republic was indeed proclaimed, but it was forgotten. So here is point number three: attaining "nation-statehood" can be among the foremost obstacles to a people's exercise of genuine self-determination and to its economic well-being. Self-determination needs to be reconceived in terms of effective self-government.

Gusein Abuyev, a Russified Lak in Dagestan, tells Karny that whereas bright students of the North Caucasus used to gain admission to the top universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg, lately many locals have been studying, if at all, at religious schools in Pakistan. Islamist schools have also cropped up locally, but Karny seems not to have visited institutions of higher learning. Nor did he make it to independent Georgia. A once relatively prosperous Soviet republic comprising dozens of (mostly assimilated) nationalities, Georgia is now bankrupted and de facto sundered by provoked and unresolved armed conflicts in North Ossetia and Abkhazia (where Chechen fighters first cut their teeth as mercenaries), while its ancient capital of Tbilisi is overrun by war refugees, pockmarked from gangland violence among state ministers, and lacking electricity—for ten years now!—save for a few hours a day.

Karny did make it to still more catastrophic Armenia, where he found that the "victory" by Karabakh—a primarily Armenian enclave of one hundred fifty thousand that defeated Azerbaijan in war and then separated from it—has led not to Armenia's annexation of Karabakh but to Karabakh's annexation of Armenia, in the form of militarized paranoid politics. Faced with rigged "elections," assassinations on the floor of the parliament, and almost no economy whatsoever (besides questionable American aid), eight hundred thousand Armenians (out of fewer than four million) have voted with their feet, emigrating to Russia and the United States. As for Azerbaijan, which Karny also briefly visited, he writes that it could one day become a Kuwait on the Caspian. Maybe at least partially: perched astride exaggerated reserves of oil and gas, Azerbaijan is beset by partition and nearly one million war-displaced homeless, but it also has in its president, the former Soviet Politburo member Heydar Aliyev, and in his son Ilham, the makings of a would-be dynastic tyranny.

IV.

On to Moldova. It is a small place, just one-third the size of Indiana, but it tells a very big story. Its sudden independence, like Central Asia's, resulted from forces beyond its control; but unlike Central Asia, Moldova enjoys the advantage of being located in Europe. And yet this pauperized, criminalized republic's prospects for integration into the European Union are nil—and the likelihood of its achieving its own integrity is not much greater.

Following a brief civil war in the early 1990s, an internationally unrecognized statelet broke away from the republic. Thus, during the short car ride from Ukraine to Romania, a traveler crossing Moldova first encounters "Transnistria," where it is necessary to pay "state" customs duty, ecological "tax," international auto "insurance," and personal "insurance," the coverage that one already possesses notwithstanding. Then one encounters a "blue-helmeted" DMZ (manned by Russian Federation troops) and finally enters "Moldova" proper, where it becomes necessary again to pay for environmental "protection" and "insurance."

Choked by official mouths to feed, Moldova lacks the wherewithal to do so. A decade after independence, its GDP stands at one-third of its 1989 level, the worst drop-off among former Soviet republics. (The dismal average hovers around one-half.) Its forests have been reduced to stumpy meadows by desperate hacking for winter fuel. Its people, too, are gone. The size of its population, 4.3 million at the last census in 1989, is currently unknown, because upwards of seven hundred fifty thousand people, fully one-third of the able-bodied workforce, have fled, illegally taking up residence in Portugal, Italy, Greece, and especially Romania and Russia, for jobs, education, and often just food.

Moldova used to supply the Soviet Union with bountiful farm products and wines. But after independence it became

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the European Union's top foreign supplier of low-priced female bodies, particularly underage girls, despite stiff competition from other post-Communist exporters. In short, Moldova is quintessential Trashcanistan. How it came to be so forms the subject of Charles King's splendid book *The Moldovans*, which draws on research in half a dozen languages.

Like the man-made disasters of Abkhazia, Karabakh, and Chechnya, Transnistria derives from both Soviet colonial malignancies and post-Soviet criminality. The Soviet Moldovan republic had been formed from historic Bessarabia—which was dominated by speakers of Romanian but belonged to Russia (under czar and commissar)—and from a small chunk of Ukraine across the Dniester River. Political power in the republic fell to the latter, the tiny, heavily industrialized region east of the river, whose elites were Russian-speaking. Speakers of Romanian (that is, Moldovan), sixty percent of the republic's total population and overwhelmingly rural, chafed, until the advent of Gorbachev.

With glasnost, King shows, the same intellectuals who in the 1960s and 1970s had toed Moscow's line against Bucharest, denying Moldova's affinities with Romania, suddenly became zealous pan-Romanians. Not only were these people entranced by the possibility of a powerful Greater Romania, but only Moldovan-speakers (among Moldovans) could be "true" Romanians. What is politics if not visionary opportunism? But ethnic fanaticism has consistently failed when tested at the ballot box throughout the post-Soviet lands, and the pan-Romanian hotheads failed to win electoral majorities even among Moldovan-speakers.

Still, they did galvanize the one hundred fifty thousand Gagauz (Orthodox Christian Turkic-speakers), whose elite began pushing for an "autonomous" republic of Gagauzia. Granted their wish, the "culturally revived" Gagauz settled down into the permanent poverty and the ineradicable corruption characteristic of post-Soviet Trashcanistans, but their "republic" remained inside Moldova. More fatefully, the pan-Romanians also galvanized the Slavic elites east of the Dniester River, and here the upshot was war and partition.

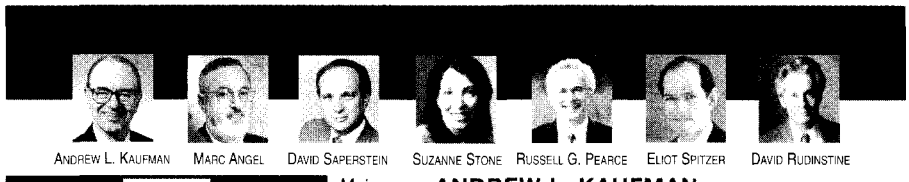
King explains that far more Russians and Ukrainians lived in western (Bessarabian) Moldova than in eastern Transnistria, where the separatists originated, and that Moldovan-speakers constituted a plurality even in Transnistria. And yet, though bereft of a nationalist base and lacking sympathy for their co-nationals elsewhere, eastern Russophone elites were ready to kill to cling to power locally. And they had the ultimate trump card: the Fourteenth Army, a showcase unit of the former Soviet military, headquartered in eastern Moldova and not demobilized in 1991.

The civil war in the summer of 1992, King shows, was partly a case of neo-imperialism by "rogue" elements in Russia, who mischievously colluded with the remnant Soviet army on behalf of the Transnistrian "cause." Above all, however, he demonstrates that the war entailed a local initiative to "defend" Soviet-era industry, which was gravely threatened by the market but could—if propped up with continued state subsidies—become a source of wild embezzlement, while remaining a solid political base. Here, too, was visionary opportunism, but with a bang.

Beating back the small Moldovan army, the Russophone elites of Transnistria emerged—after one thousand deaths and one hundred thirty thousand internally displaced persons—with their own "private" statelet, a Trashcanistan no more than twenty miles wide, complete with president, flag, and "currency," and with its Moldovan-speaking plurality intact. "The Moldovan story," King grimly concludes, "is fundamentally about the troubled relationship between political elites," whether pan-Romanian or Transnistrian, "and the people they claim to [but do not] represent." Of course, this chasm derives not from bad individuals but from deeply illiberal state institutions. So this is point number four: post-Soviet wars—which were non-inevitable outgrowths of Soviet legacies—may look fundamentally ethnic, but they are predominantly political and predominantly criminal.

THERE IS YET a deeper point. Treatises on nations whose titles include the phrase "the construction of..." are choking university libraries, but in *The Moldovans* King has spotlighted one of the numerous national constructions that failed. According to prevailing theories, Moldova should have been a textbook case for national formation. King rightly notes that all nations are fundamentally artificial. Eighty years ago in these lands, a largely illiterate peasant population stood primed to be "Moldovanized" by the introduction of universal education, conscription, and other familiar aspects of state-sponsored nation-building projects. But even now Moldova is not close to becoming an ethnic nation, let alone a civic one.

Today's Moldovan-speakers resolutely do not consider themselves Romanians (the sentiment is mutual). In fact, post-Soviet Moldovan-speakers, who have a very high level of bilingualism in Russian, a high degree of inter-ethnic tolerance



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("far higher in fact than in Romania"), and a high incidence of mixed marriage, belong to a lingering imperial civilization. At the same time, Moldova's estimated half-million Russians and half-million Russian-speaking Ukrainians—try to tell them apart!—do not identify with either the Russian state or the Ukrainian state, but they also do not speak Moldovan. They are members of a populous, fragmented "Soviet nation"—perhaps even more conscious of its Sovietness now that the empire is gone. So here is point number five: the "nations" and the "states" that constituted the Soviet Union were in almost all cases created by it, and not surprisingly they turned out to be very Soviet; and this is especially so for the "national minorities" in the suddenly independent republics.

Economically unreformed (despite solemn declarations of intent) and physically partitioned (though not along ethnic lines), Moldova, let alone Transnistria, appears to serve no one's interests—except for protection rackets and (excuse the redundancy) state administrators. Moldova acquired multiple political parties, elections, and parliaments, but they have all been trumped by the Soviet-era executive-branch machinery, which came ready-made (complete with courts) and has proved easily expandable. Society—disorganized, poor, and without a strong and independent legal system—has been overmatched. Meanwhile an avowed neo-Communist who swept to the Moldovan presidency promised the electorate that he would "revive" socialism and "deepen" links with Russia, which destitute Moldova owed an unpayable $700 million for natural gas. Transnistria, for its part, announced plans to replace Soviet passports (which remain in use) with internationally unrecognized Transnistrian "passports," good for travel to nowhere.

V.

UKRAINE, A REPUBLIC of forty-nine million people and shrinking, may seem wholly unlike Moldova, but sadly it is a neighbor more than geographically. *Ukraine: The Search for a National Identity*, a volume of scholarly essays, does not approach Charles King's achievement for Moldova. The collection covers Ukrainian politics in detail, but it never explains the political system. It deals with Ukrainian-Russian relations as a matter of security and identity, but not of economic ties. It lacks any comparative dimension, and it is more dated than usual for works on contemporary subjects. Still, this book stands above the mounds of rubbish that have been published on Ukraine (a conclusion that I have reached the hard way).

From foreign policy to feminism, the essays range across deep anxieties about Ukrainian "national" identity. Ilya Prizel, in a lament born of crushed naïveté, sets the book's tone, writing that "the independence of Ukraine was a conservative rather than a revolutionary move ... an effort to preserve the existing order," which proved successful, even though elites embraced the cause of independence only in 1990, or for some in 1991. Evhen Holovakha, characterizing Ukraine as "a post-Communist hybrid" that preserved all but the ideology, risks offending Ukrainian sensibilities by aptly comparing the country to Belarus, a ten-million-person "collective farm" run by a former collective-farm chairman, President Alexander Lukashenko. Volodymyr Zviglyanich, writing of Ukraine's "as if" democracy and "as if" market, points out that "a remarkable paradox emerges: the lower the level of market value of the enterprises, the wealthier the bureaucracy becomes," and concludes presciently that "such a system could exist for an unlimited time."

Since these essays were written, economic, financial, and legal reforms have continued to be announced and have continued not to take place. President Leonid Kuchma, re-elected in 1999 by intimidation and fraud, failed to shove Ukraine in the direction of "super-presidentialism"; Ukraine's parliament still wields greater power than Russia's Duma. But Kuchma and Co. managed to outdo their counterparts in Moldova by establishing (without tank fire) their own undeclared Transnistria right inside the executive branch of the Ukrainian state. It comprises an apparent dirty-tricks squad (the "Eagles") in the Interior Ministry, the central tax inspectorate, the national election commission, fixer "consultants" (some hired from Russia), the successor agency to the KGB, the procurator general's office, and the Central Committee–like presidential administration.

This machinery—beyond a mafia don's wildest dream—embezzles colossal sums of money that it launders abroad, manipulates voting outcomes, forcibly expropriates businesses, destroys even the pathetically semi-independent media, methodically blackmails and frames critics or rivals, covers up the criminal acts committed by itself and those whom it favors—and, if already partially corroborated secret tapes (made and smuggled out by a former top-level security officer) are to be credited, engages in the decapitation of its enemies. Ousting Kuchma alone may not solve much. Far from being a one-man operation, the gangsterization of the Ukrainian executive has been broad-based, and it follows a very lengthy run of rampant malfeasance, from capital to regions. (George Soros has remarked that Ukraine gives corruption a bad name.)

Like Moldova, Ukraine is a Soviet-era confection. Not only were its national identity and its statehood consolidated within the Soviet Union, but Ukraine exists in the expansive form in which it does today only thanks to Stalin's unilateral annexation of eastern Poland, which became western Ukraine—a turnabout that Ukrainians call "unification." (Another chunk of territory was bitten off from Slovakia.) Further wartime and postwar events included the expulsion of Poles and the extermination of Jews. To the south, Crimea (formerly Tatar and later Russian) was capriciously transferred from the Russian republic to Ukraine in 1954, to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the Ukrainian-Russian "union" (which most Ukrainophone nationalists refuse to acknowledge, though their protest falls short of offering to return the commemorative gift).

As a result of immigration, too, Ukraine, like Moldova, contains citizens who mostly do not speak the "state" language, including nine to ten million Russians massed in industrial eastern Ukraine as well as in Crimea (where they form a majority). But just as in Moldova, today's Russians, most of whom were born in Ukrainian territory, do not identify with the Russian Federation; they are products of a Soviet educational curriculum, Soviet military service, and an imperial Russian-language media (still largely intact). Even more than in Moldova, the "titular nation" in Ukraine has been Russified—to the point that, as Victor Basiuk notes, half or more of the ethnically Ukrainian population speaks Russian at home.

In fact, most ethnic Ukrainians, whether or not they speak much Ukrainian, are indistinguishable from Russians. Many ethnic Russians have re-registered as "Ukrainians" without knowledge of the language. Other ethnic Russians have been recategorized as "Russian-speakers," as have other Soviet nationalities living in Ukraine—Moldovans, or Armenians, or Tatars, or those of mixed parentage. Ukrainian electoral politics are less ethnic than regional. So this is point number six: wrapping an executive-branch syndicate in the "legitimacy" of the nation may be the essence of Trashcanistan, but national or ethnic distinctions do not carry the mass political weight that is regularly attributed to them.

EMPHASIZING THE "VAST ethnic tolerance" of ordinary people—surely the upside of the contradictory Soviet imperial legacy—Gregory Nemiria observes that "Ukraine's regional diversity is ultimately a source of

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strength." A refreshing perspective, but can it be made tangible? Ukraine's ballyhooed strategy for "demonstrating" independence, a foreign policy of "opting for Europe," remains devoid of substance—other than the self-delusion that Ukraine is "indispensable" as a "counterweight" to Russia, which the Europeans do not believe and are sick of hearing as the response to inquiries about still-nonexistent structural reforms. Western Ukraine, once a multinational, cosmopolitan province of the Hapsburgs and then of Poland, is now a self-enclosed, chauvinistic backwater, isolated even from Kiev, let alone from its Western neighbors.

Paul Goble observes that "many Ukrainian industries can function if and only if they receive supplies and raw materials from the Russian Federation. Everyone recognizes this unhappy fact." But other essays indulge the paranoid charges of Russian "subversion" that are characteristic of Ukrainian apologetics. If Russia "demands" that Ukraine pay for billions of dollars' worth of oil and gas supplies, this is "blackmail" endangering Ukraine's sovereignty—never mind that in 1997 Moscow signed a comprehensive treaty with Kiev recognizing current borders, and that it is Ukrainian elites who are looting the public purse and rendering the state incapable of paying its bills. (Ukraine has also owed Turkmenistan more than $1 billion for gas). While the Russian government relinquished challenges to Ukrainian sovereignty, thereby removing Ukraine as a hindrance in Russian relations with Europe, both private and state-owned Russian businesses have vigorously pursued extensive economic re-integration with Ukraine from a position of advantage. It is a classic postcolonial pattern.

To be sure, there is a threat to the undesirable subversion of Ukraine: the one posed by the malfeasance of its own "leaders." According to polls, a majority of Ukrainians have turned against independence. Even though the Ukrainian economy is far larger than official statistics indicate—much of the economy is underground—new flags, new street names, and new national textbooks have not resulted in investment in infrastructure, informative media, the rule of law, or a political system that inspires anything but shame. Young Ukrainians are decidedly Western in orientation, but when traveling east they discover Moscow to be more "Western" and wealthier than Kiev. Meanwhile, intellectuals' tormented search for a "national" identity works against policies that could take better advantage of Ukraine's diverse makeup and crossroads location, as well as the attainment of self-government worth having. Ukraine has gotten its state and is eating it, too.

VI.

TINY ESTONIA COMMENDS itself as the grand exception. It underwent successful shock therapy (rapid institutionalization of the market), leading analysts to trumpet this republic of 1.4 million people as proof of shock therapy's transcendent rightfulness. Of course, several countries decreed shock therapy, such as Moldova, though only a few tried to implement it, such as Kyrgyzstan; but they failed hideously. Thus, the deeper question is how Estonia proved able to achieve not just basic measures such as liberalizing trade, eliminating subsidies, and making the new currency convertible and stable (with a currency board), but also guaranteeing property rights, establishing reliable credit systems, and attracting direct foreign investment (rather than just "aid").

It is highly telling that Estonia got the politics right, too. Rather than the usual post-Soviet autocratic and ineffectual "presidential" system, Estonia emerged with a strong parliament and a weak presidency, and with governments based on elected legislative majorities rather than on presidential whim. Also, Soviet-era cadres did not come to dominate independent Estonia's elite. New people, particularly of the younger generation, gained prominent places in public life. In short, a miracle.

How do we explain it? *Return to the Western World: Cultural and Political Perspectives on the Estonian Post-Communist Transition* contains superbly researched interdisciplinary essays, but it might be more valuable for propagating myths that contributed to Estonia's success. Several of the authors write poetically of the country's triumphal "return to Europe." The book itself is the culmination of a joint Swedish-Estonian project launched in the early 1990s, and is published by Estonia's Swedish-founded Tartu University, renewing ties that had been blocked by Communist restrictions. It is co-edited by Marju Lauristin, a new-era Estonian political figure. In one of her contributions, she enlists Samuel Huntington's "theory" of the clash of civilizations to avow that "Western-Christian" Estonia lies across a civilizational divide from Byzantine Russia, adding poignancy to the vision of a "return" to the West. Crowning the mythmaking, Lauristin credits herself and comrades with bringing down the Soviet Union.

The book is no less remarkable, however, for contradicting all of these myths. Peeter Vihalemm recalls how the lands of today's Estonia successively endured the harsh boot of German occupation (1227–1561) and Swedish occupation (1561–1710) well before they fell beneath imperial Russian domination (1710–1918). Helmut Piirimäe explains that in the sixteenth-century bloodbath leading to Estonia's forced incorporation into Sweden, "about half or even more of the population of Estonia ... perished." Swedes then expropriated the nobles' manors and enserfed the local peasantry, and famine and further war followed. When czarist Russia lost its grip on Estonia in the disintegrating dénouement of World War I, the fledgling state sent emissaries to Sweden to beg for recognition, and the Swedes refused it.

Historically speaking, then, the Estonian exit from the Soviet orbit is not a "return" to the West—unless one overlooks the fact that Estonia had been a subjugated pawn of the West. As for the great civilizational divide, two Swedish scholars, Karl Erik Rosengren and Lennart Weibull, report greater differences in value systems between today's Estonians and the "Western-Christian" Latvians or Lithuanians than between Estonians and "Eastern Orthodox" Russians living in Estonia.

Equally dubious is the assertion that Estonia toppled the Soviet behemoth. Prior to Gorbachev, Lauristin herself writes, the republic had "no strongly political opposition worth mentioning," while "the number of political dissidents ... was small and their activities had no extensive social response." As the daughter of a leading Estonian Communist—who died in 1941 fleeing the Nazi occupation, which was far less oppressive here than elsewhere—Lauristin neglects to add that all the perestroika-era Popular Fronts (officially "popular fronts for the support of perestroika") were created with assistance from the Communist Party and the KGB to outflank local hard-liner resistance to the Moscow-instigated reforms. Anyway, it was not the street demonstrations in Estonia—which was fully occupied by loyal Soviet troops—but Yeltsin and the Russian republic's shattering 1990 sovereignty drive against the Kremlin, and Gorbachev's momentous decision to let Eastern Europe go, that opened the way to Estonian independence.

And yet Estonia's mythification of its independence movement has carried enormous political weight, rather like de Gaulle's grand invention that the French resisted the Nazis and then liberated themselves. Similarly, the idea of Estonia having had a place in the West that it has now regained has served as a very effective strategy for national consolidation, while the malarkey about civilizational divide has provided additional reinforcement. Finally, one must include the fable of Estonia's "return" to its independent interwar "democratic" republic. Vihalemm, underscoring interwar Estonia's

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authoritarianism, observes that in the 1990s the old constitution was rejected as an unsuitable model.

No matter. The myth of reconnecting to an earlier democratic republic also partly explains the willingness of Estonians to endure the terrible sacrifices of real reform. Neither Lauristin nor her coauthors say as much. Quite the contrary: they present these myths as straightforward history. "To forget and—I will venture to say—to get one's history wrong," Renan once wrote, "are essential factors in the making of a nation." So here is point number seven: all national myths are "false," but what really matters is whether they are benign or malignant, and effective or ineffective; and exceptional cases such as Estonia (mostly effective and mostly benign) mislead us to see legitimacy in any nation-state or national movement.

YET POTENT MYTHS, despite their importance, cannot alone account for Estonia's trajectory. Other material presented non-systematically in this volume, when combined with the work of R. A. Panagiotou, deepens the explanatory picture. Soviet-era Estonia enjoyed unobstructed Finnish (that is, Western) television from the 1960s on—almost two decades before glasnost. Partly as a result, increasing numbers of Estonians reported Finnish as their second language, while the country's relatively low level of Russian-language competency declined further. (Levels of Russian among neighboring Soviet republics increased over the same period.)

Equally significant, there was far less Soviet-era investment in industry. This might have looked like a disadvantage at the time, but it meant that independent Estonia emerged with far fewer white-elephant factories, and also with vastly less of the social constituency rooted in planned-economy structures and hostile to the market reforms that never happened in, say, Ukraine. Estonia also benefited from being an experimental laboratory for many of the Soviet-era reforms that became Union-wide during perestroika, and as a result it got more quickly beyond the dead-end "reform" of planning to its complete elimination.

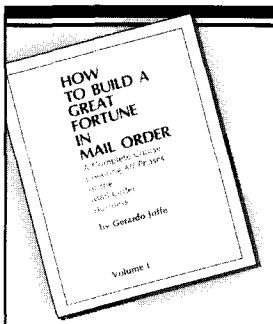
After 1991, Estonia capitalized on its Finnish connections to re-orient its trade very rapidly toward the West and thus to firms operating according to market incentives. Tallinn, Estonia's capital, which contains one-third of the country's population, is on its way to becoming the southern outskirts of Helsinki across the water. Estonia even has its own oil shale, so it is less dependent on Russia for energy. In sum, the republic bootstrapped itself westward thanks to its cultural affinities with and enormous help from Finland, a process in which Moscow was both inadvertently and deliberately complicit. So here is point number eight: the path that a republic traced after 1991 was to a great extent the path that it had been on before the unforeseen advent of independence.

Estonia's painful initial push toward the market and parliamentary politics, begun before 1991, was crucially assisted by Finland, but it still might have unraveled. Yet the lure of EU accession, which mandates institutional "harmonization," provided strong additional impetus for continued far-reaching structural change and endurance of hardship. In 1999, the European Union advanced Estonia to the front of the accession line, calling it a "shining star" and the only "functioning market economy" in the Baltics.

Still, Estonians will tell you that they are not a Baltic country, but a Scandinavian country. And they are right. Lithuania and Latvia had the same Western-Christian traditions, the same living memories of an independent interwar republic, and the same truncated Soviet history. They also made the same declarations about a "return" to the West and the advisability of shock therapy, and they, too, have had the lure of joining the EU. But Lithuania and especially Latvia are mired in mostly play-acting reform. What they lack is Estonia's very different Brezhnev-era history—its relative lack of Sovietness and its closeness to an interested partner (such as Finland). These were the historical conditions that gave force to the myths about a return to Western civilization. So point number nine: if you strive to become institutionally like (and to join) Europe, it pays to be smack on the EU border already, and to have a neighbor willing to help pull you across.

FOR ALL ITS relative success, Estonia's standard of living remains terribly depressed by Western standards. It also suffers from destabilizing inequality and political graft. If you arrive from just across the border in provincial Russia, Estonia looks prosperous, but not if you fly in from Sweden (or from Moscow). Estonians' rising interest in Sweden is being met by a declining interest in Estonia on the part of Swedes.

Crucially, though, Estonia's "Russian-speaking" population is optimistic about the future, and does not identify with the Russian republic. Local Russians do not see themselves as a threat to Estonia, but Estonian-speakers do; the Russophone population faces discrimination and restrictive citizen laws, though they pay taxes, perform military service, and push



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their children to learn Estonian. Fittingly, the cover of *Return to the Western World* depicts Jonah escaping from a red whale. And although the Russian embassy remains the largest one in Estonia, Estonia's ethnic Russian population, too, has escaped to the West, albeit to its lowest rung. Admittedly, the closer Estonia gets to actual EU accession and a partial surrender of sovereignty, the bigger the drop in poll support for joining (now under fifty percent). But that, too, is a very European story.

VII.

To recap: the six former Soviet republics stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine) and the eight others located on either side of the Caspian Sea (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan) share a Soviet imperial heritage with each other and with Russia, though not to the same degree. Today, all but Estonia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan are semi-dependent on Russia for energy or markets or security: unavoidable realities that need to be turned into reciprocal opportunities and made the most of.

In the south, even those states that do not border Russia are not far removed from Moscow's influence. In the west, all but one of the six states border directly on Russia, and the exception, Moldova, owing to Transnistria and its own impoverishment, is susceptible to Russian machinations (though not to the same degree as Belarus). By contrast, Russia and Ukraine have achieved a stable relationship politically and economically. Most important, despite the circumstance of six million ethnic Ukrainians and twenty-five million ethnic Russians (thirty-six million, if one counts "Russian-speakers") living outside "their" new states, Ukraine's and Russia's elites have not pursued the suicidal wars that engulfed Yugoslavia.

Central Asian elites, too, their authoritarianism and their looting notwithstanding, have mostly not incited their populations to the brink. (Tajikistan's war is the exception.) But the same cannot be said of Transcaucasia, the site of five of the seven post-Soviet civil wars: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Ingushetia/North Ossetia, Karabakh, and Chechnya. As a tangle of the worst divide-and-rule legacies, homegrown political gangsters (dressed in ethnic garb), and huge internally displaced or refugee populations, the Caucasus gives Trashcanistan a bad name.

A general conclusion appears inescapable: nation-statism has proven instrumental for consolidating and even extending the illiberal hyper-executive branches and shadow economies inherited from Soviet times. But rather than citing the nation-state framework or the Soviet inheritance, explanation for the ills of the newly independent Trashcanistans—and of Russia itself—usually adduce neoliberal reforms (which mostly did not take place) and Russian "imperialism."

Whether the Kremlin finds the courage and wherewithal to facilitate a resolution for Transnistria in Moldova and Abkhazia in Georgia, and to negotiate an end to its domestic Chechen calamity, remains to be seen. Institutionally, Russia has managed more structural reform in the past two years than in the previous eight years, as stake-holding gonifs and other swells moved from rip-offs to increasing value. But Russia still lacks a banking system, and it has yet to fully confront its retrograde military and security establishment. That said, warts and all, Russia leads every other former Soviet republic—except Estonia—on most key political and economic indicators.

So here is bonus point eleven: Russia has already gained the most from the end of the Soviet Union—a result not fully grasped in Moscow, but predictable from earlier European decolonization, whereby former colonizers reluctantly discovered that despite their "loss of prestige" they reaped greater benefits at lower costs from former colonies thanks to the end of formal empire.

VIII.

Dominic Lieven's history of empire is a work of majestic sweep. It presents history as great power politics, and great power politics, in turn, as the state's ability to mobilize men and resources. Its realism seeks to remove some of the pejorative connotations of empire. Lieven usefully points out that not until the 1860s did "empire" come to mean overseas possessions, adding that "empires have existed since ancient times" and "are one of the most common forms of state in history," so that "to write the history of empire would be close to writing the history of mankind."

Understandably forgoing the task of writing an encyclopedia, Lieven selects case studies based upon a four-part definition of empire: a very great power, a conglomeration of territories and peoples, an undemocratic political system, and a sense of itself as a civilization. He takes us from ancient Rome and imperial China through the modern British, Hapsburg, Ottoman, and especially Russian empires, ending with suggestive reflections on the Soviet demise. "This book is certainly not an apologia for empire," he explains, "but even an attempt to understand an empire's dilemmas and to compare some of its achievements will raise hackles."

Heavy with erudition, Lieven's work brims with grand judgments. He believes, for example, that the American civil war was a turning point in world history. "Even more than the British, the Americans dislike geopolitics and prefer it sweetened and well wrapped in tales of moral certainty," he observes, adding however that the 1860s "emergence on North American soil of a nation rooted in populist racialism and ruled by a semi-agrarian aristocracy might well have changed the whole balance of geopolitical and ideological forces in the world." This would have likely precluded the post-1890s Anglo-American alliance, which Lieven sees as the foundation of our modern world system.

A second theme is the seesaw of Germany and Russia: when one has been up, the other has generally been down. Lieven perceives more of a threat in a downtrodden Russia than in a resurgent Germany, since Germany is transformed and securely within the European Union, which he regards as a welcome competitor to the United States. Unusual for a British conservative, Lieven combines an unwavering commitment to the transatlantic "special relationship" with a deep veneration of the Continent.

His third theme is what he sees as the continental precursor of the European Union—the Hapsburgs. He argues that "to a unique extent Austria-Hungary by 1900 was beginning to transcend the historical definition of empire and was moving in the direction of a democratic multi-national federation, able to offer its peoples the economic benefits of a huge market, legally protected equality in status, and the security that was empire's traditional boon". But he also admits that in 1914 the monarchy could neither annex nor crush independent Serbia—and still the Hapsburg ruling circles issued the Serbs an ultimatum, as if the prospect of world war were an aristocratic duel. Lieven might also have noted that the monarchs and the generals who sent millions of able-bodied men to death emboldened revolutionaries such as Lenin to shed blood for a "legitimate" cause, and in this way made Lenin's deadly message far more appealing.

Largely pre–World War I in temperament, Lieven's project proves less illuminating for the grisly twentieth century. The Soviet Union, which refused to call itself an empire, responded to the nation-state "triumphs" ushered in by World War I by recognizing national homelands and joining them into a supranational federation of sorts. The resulting Union of Soviet Socialist

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Republics, which was formed in 1922, was partly meant to counter the British and French overseas empires: the USSR offered subject peoples something akin to an "empire of nations," that is, many nations got their own "states" (or republics).

Lieven tends to downplay these modern efforts to confront, however hamfistedly, the contradictions between empire and nation. He only briefly mentions a third competing twentieth-century model of empire—one of codified racial hierarchy and economic autarky—carried out by the Nazi "New Order" in Europe and the Japanese "Co-Prosperity Sphere" in East Asia, each of which imitated the British and the French while seeking to outdo them. Lieven also barely touches upon a fourth model—that of the United States, which opposed empire, but which, through a combination of destruction or displacement of native peoples and assimilation of all others (blacks less so), became a grand "nation of nations" pursuing a quasi-imperial world economy that it could dominate.

Lieven could have extended the analysis. The competing twentieth-century models—an empire based upon a conquering master race (Germany and Japan), an overseas empire without citizenship for natives (Britain and France), an empire of nations possessing states within a nominal federation (the Soviet Union), and a "free trade" nation of nations (the United States)—clashed in World War II, with the latter three arrayed against the first. Defeated, Germany and Japan turned to the American-style approach of democratic nationhood, finding problematic the assimilation of indispensable immigrant laborers but enjoying great economic weight in relations with other countries, including former colonies. Britain and France soon did the same.

Thus, as a consequence of World War II, every major power fell in line with the American "nation of nations" model—except the Soviet "empire of nations," until it, too, was dissolved. It is notable that no empire has ever been converted into a stable and democratic federation. In sum, formal empire has not worked, owing to its inability to figure out how to deal with "nation," and owing also to the example and the power exerted by the United States. China, almost uniquely, represents a still intact imperial contraption (encompassing Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet) that by demographic excess and coercion has transformed itself into a nation-state; but China is autocratic and thus ultimately unstable. Across southern Eurasia, India stands out as a democratic nation-state, showing that the key to success, like the key to failure, is not ethnic homogeneity—which India obviously does not have—but liberal politics and workable institutions.

In Lieven's eyes, empires struggled to manage multi-ethnicity in "civilized" fashion. He acknowledges that they also pursued expansion and glorified their militaries, but he urges that condemnation "is much too simple" because "in its time empire was often a force for peace, prosperity and the exchange of ideas across much of the globe. It sustained great cultures and civilizations." Of course, whatever empire might have done for the multitudes, it always existed to serve the few—royal family and nobility, general secretary and nomenklatura; and in any case it invariably undermined itself. Even so, Lieven is on to something. Empire as he imagines it *would* be a better idea.

And Lieven is not alone. People of all ages, from Kyrgyzstan to Belarus, recall or are aware of the many absurdities of Soviet life, but they also see that past refracted through the false promises and the ugly realities of their "nation-states." They want private property but also ethnic intermingling instead of ethnic cleansing, and family resorts rather than war zones. In the case of the European Union, the hard road to federal re-integration has gone through the consolidation of democratic nation-states, above all in the core country of Germany (the smallest yet economically most powerful unified German state in history). In economically interdependent East Asia, a similar role has been played by Japan. Indeed, for all the hot air about globalization, the world today consists of three regionally based loci of power and prosperity—Germany (the old Nazi New Order), Japan (the old Co-Prosperity Sphere), and the United States, which together account for close to three-fifths of world national income. The successful "empire" is the anti-empire.

IT IS TEMPTING to imagine that Russia, too, might follow this course, and become a post-imperial centerpiece for economic integration, and even a trans-national democratic community, in Eurasia. Certainly much of the younger generation, which is extraordinarily post-Soviet, offers hope in this regard. Higher education, among the best aspects of the Soviet inheritance, is valued more highly than ever: new colleges have proliferated (not all of them good), and the demand for slots in the better universities has gone through the roof. Despite myriad problems, the system has maintained a certain quality while undergoing wrenching transformation. Improvements in education and generational change may prove to be the most important factors in a true transition.

But many top professors have been lost and many top graduates emigrate. For these young people, Russia and Eurasia warrant comparison not with Western Europe, anchored by a transformed Germany, or with East Asia, anchored by a transformed Japan, but with Africa, which has experienced a similarly pseudo-democratic and kleptocratic—albeit much bloodier—post-imperial pattern. When the nation-state works, it beguiles everyone; when it flops, it does so egregiously, producing a self-sustaining morass. The fifteen-plus Trashcanistans are styled as nation-states, which both enables and excuses their self-vandalism. The half-forgotten CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) is an empty shell. Though the empire is dead—and the Russian elite will more and more come to see the advantages of its death—the possibility of European-style integration is a painfully long way off.

And yet the European Union and the euro hold out much promise in the near term. Eurasian relations with Europe are a matter between those parties. But the United States, which fails to meet the requirements for admission into the European Union, should encourage not just Baltic but also long-term Russian and Ukrainian integration into the EU—for

Instant Message

January 21

Art is that which can be
interrupted John Cage
said according to David
Shapiro in Instant Message
mode his son is taking Advanced
Biology (we called it sex)
how sweet, as a harlot said
to Baudelaire I asked how
he said "not sure, as
Wittgenstein said about
the presence of rhinos in his room"
and Cage praised silence
than which nothing could be more
theatrical except maybe the evening
sun that never goes down
"layered in light like leaves"
and on the day he (Cage) died the kids
said to me the guy you're always
quoting is dead I said who who who
the guy you're quoting is always dead

David Lehman

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which both strategic countries would have to undergo deeper structural reforms to qualify, a worthy process even if its success remains distant. Near-term entry into the World Trade Organization will be hard but also helpful, both as process and result. (An eternally elusive breakthrough in Russo-Japanese relations, trapped in territorial disputes over four rocks in the Pacific, could bring multilateral benefits, too, to which the belated opening of the large-scale Sakhalin energy project attests.)

Facilitating cooperation in Caspian and especially Russian energy development should have been a no-brainer even before America's dependence on Saudi Arabia came into question. Opening the American domestic market more to Russia as well as Ukraine, the way it has been opened wide for Communist-led China, is a long-term strategy for promoting change and mutual benefit. And rather than stroke Russia or contrive some Russian relationship with a manifestly obsolete NATO, which neither side truly wants, the United States should transform existing bilateral programs for destroying and managing weapons of mass destruction into a formal strategic alliance with Moscow on nonproliferation. This is not a matter of "partnership" or "friendship." It is a matter of raw mutual interest. Skeptics and emotional Russophobes take note: no other country has Russia's capacity to counterbalance Saudi Arabia's role in Western energy supply. And no other country has Russia's capacity to arm rogue actors with weapons of mass destruction, by design or accident, and generally to play the role of spoiler simultaneously in Europe, Inner Asia, and East Asia—except, of course, the United States. ■

Cherchez la Femme

By DAVID A. BELL

The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern by Carla Hesse

(Princeton University Press, 233 pp., $35)

LOOMING HIGH ABOVE the rooftops of the Left Bank sits a lugubrious monument of the French Republic: the Pantheon, final resting place of the "great men of the *patrie*." Its oppressively severe classicism, an exaggerated evocation of republican Rome, betrays the anxieties of its eighteenth-century architects, and recalls Heine's line about the impossibility of introducing republican severity into a city of one hundred fifty thousand stylists, perfumers, and hairdressers. Downstairs, the claustrophobic crypt houses a very peculiar selection of illustrious French corpses. The Pantheon has admitted no kings and few generals, but many *engagé* intellectuals and intellectual politicians, in a very French marriage of politics and higher learning.

For more than two hundred years after the monument's opening in 1791, its roster of national heroes had one further peculiarity: it included not a single woman. Only in 1995 did Marie Curie finally take up belated residence in one of its somber mausoleums. And when she did, it was in the company of her husband Pierre.

At first glance, this exclusion of women would seem to confirm a story about the French past that feminist historians have been developing for some time now. As they tell it, the eighteenth century's new birth of freedom for men entailed nothing less than a new birth of servitude for women. Before the Revolution of 1789, women had exercised a surprising degree of influence in French public life, as courtiers, aristocratic patrons, or hostesses of intellectual salons. Yet the Revolution brought this influence to an end, and prescribed new and far more rigid gender distinctions.

If, after the Revolution, all men could vote and speak freely and stand for office, women were confined to the household, to serve as helpmeets and mothers, unable even to publish a line without the explicit consent of their husbands. And this "separation of spheres" did not crumble away until the belated extension of the suffrage to women in 1946, and the establishment of legal equality within marriage in 1965. Until then, women unwilling to accept their prescribed fate could do little more than wrestle with the paradoxes of a politics that both offered and denied them the "rights of man," as Joan Scott argued in 1996 in *Only Paradoxes to Offer*.

It is a gloomy story, and one that not all feminists and historians entirely accepted. But it had a great influence, in large part because no scholar stepped forward to offer a persuasive alternate story of French women's journey into modernity. Carla Hesse has now done this, in her short, suggestive, and brilliant book. She offers a story that does not ignore the evidence of the Pantheon, but seeks instead to put it into a different, more complex, and more interesting perspective.

Hesse, who trained as a historian of the book and who edits *Representations*, the flagship journal of the "New Historicism," has a keen sense for how cultural hierarchies work. She has argued in other writings that modern interpretations of the Enlightenment unjustly prefer certain genres over others: Rousseau's formal treatises over his more widely read sentimental novel, for example. In her new book Hesse develops a similar idea with reference to French women.

If we are to find what Hesse calls an "arena for female self-constitution" in modern France, a place where women carved out a space of autonomy, it could not have been within the supposedly "higher" realms of politics and higher learning, in which their subordination was clearly prescribed. The realm in which women achieved autonomy, Hesse contends, was the realm of literature. It was less valued by the male mandarins of the Pantheon (and the nearby École Normale), and consequently more open to women's participation. The central chapters of Hesse's book illustrate how women of the revolutionary era not only found an outlet for their ambitions in the writing of novels, but also used their novels to criticize, if sometimes obliquely, the cultural order that the Revolution brought into being. Hesse briefly traces out a female canon of authors who continued this tradition, from Germaine de Staël through George Sand and Colette to Simone de Beauvoir.

THIS BOLD AND imaginative interpretation unfortunately gets off to a shaky start, in an introductory chapter given to overreaching generalizations. In Old Regime France, Hesse asserts, it was women who defined the extremes of unacceptable forms of speech: on the one hand the vulgar slang of Paris fishwives, on the other hand the pretentious patter of aristocratic *précieuses*. Yet much evidence suggests that the fishwives and the *précieuses* figured among a great many groups who all symbolized uncouth language in their ways, including *patois*-speaking peasants, pedantic bourgeois,

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You deserve a factual look at...

Terror in Israel – and in the World

Is "peace" possible under present conditions?

The news brings us daily ever more gruesome stories of the bloodlust of the Palestinians, whose suicide thugs kill and maim hundreds and who lob mortars and missiles into Israeli neighborhoods. Preferred targets of those massacres are children and teenagers. Is "peace" possible with a people who perform and condone such outrageous acts?

What are the facts?

A history of terror: Arab-Muslim terror in Israel has been going on for a very long time. Pogroms have been perpetrated on the Jewish population for almost 100 years, one of the most egregious being the carnage in Hebron in 1929, in which the Arabs killed 129 Jews and grievously wounded and maimed 399, many of them women and children. The current outrages have acquired new bloody dimensions because of the introduction of the "suicide martyrs" and because of the weapons that the Palestinians have been able to smuggle into their territory and those that the Israelis have foolishly provided to them.

Our country has risen in justified outrage and has gone to war to pursue those who have inflicted 4,000 casualties on us. Israel has one-fiftieth of the population of the United States. The about 500 Jews who have been killed by the Palestinians in the past eighteen months corresponds to about 25,000 killed in the United States. Would the American people stand still for that? Of course not! How much forbearance does the world expect before Israel lashes out and inflicts terrible punishment on its tormentors?

These are the same people who have blown up the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, the Jewish Community Center in the same city, and the Israeli Embassy in London. Hundreds of people were killed. There can be no question that they were also behind the PanAm flight 103 plane explosion which killed 270 people, mostly Americans; that they were responsible for the blowing up of the Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia, in which 19 Air Force personnel died; and in literally hundreds of other acts of terror. All of these terror acts are specifically authorized by Yassir Arafat. That is a man who until not too long ago was classified as an international terrorist by the U.S. State Department. That he has received the Nobel Peace Price must be considered a cosmic joke.

Any pretext suffices. The basic understanding with Arafat and his Palestinian Arabs was that terror and mayhem would stop after the signing of the Oslo Agreement. That has not happened. On the contrary, more Jews have been killed by terror attacks since the famous handshake between the late Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin and Yassir Arafat than in any comparable period before it. Arafat and the "Palestinian Authority" do nothing to stop this slaughter; on the contrary, they actively encourage their followers to use violence to accomplish their ends. In blood-curdling speeches, Arafat and his henchman goad their followers into violence, urging them to "liberate Palestine by jihad (holy war) with blood and with fire."

> " Israel should respond harshly to any further provocations and should not enter into any further negotiations with the Palestine Authority and with Yassir Arafat – a blood-stained terrorist. "

The current rampage was supposedly triggered by Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. And why shouldn't he visit the Temple Mount? It's in Israel,isn't it? The Arabs-Muslims can visit any place in Israel, without anybody standing in their way. Were it not for that freedom, there would be no suicide bombers. The dreadful acts of slaughter are committed because of the undying hatred of the Jews, a hatred that permeates the Muslim world. The purpose is to kill and maim as many Jews as possible.

And that is the nub of the problem. Only the most naïve can any longer believe that the Palestinian Arabs (or the rest of the Arab-Muslim world) can be placated by the Israelis bringing further "sacrifices for peace." The Arabs will not be satisfied with any piece of land. Even if the Israeli Jews were prepared to hand over the entire land of Israel to the Arabs and only retain perhaps, the enclave of Tel Aviv, it would not suffice. The elimination of any Jewish vestige is the inalterable goal.

The presence of Jews in the Middle East is an unacceptable thorn in the side of the Arabs – an insult that must be avenged and eliminated. But, of course, no peace can come about until that attitude and mindset change. And that may take a very long time.

Regardless of what other proposals may be put on the table by well-meaning (and sometimes not so well-meaning) third parties, the Palestinians having their own governance and living side by side with Israel in harmony and co-prosperity is simply not possible at the present time. Former prime minister Ehud Barak, under the insistent pressure of former president Clinton, offered breathtaking concessions to the Palestinians, concessions that would have fulfilled virtually all of their stated aspirations, including even the de facto partition of Jerusalem. But Mr. Arafat haughtily rejected them and unleashed his bloody intifada instead. Israel should respond harshly to any further provocations and should not enter into any further negotiations with the Palestine Authority and with Yassir Arafat, because he is not a nation builder but a blood-stained terrorist, the perfect counterpart to Osama bin Laden. Nobody, not the United States, nor any other country, nor the United Nations should be the arbiter of Israel's destiny. Only Israel should determine whether its national rights and its security requirements are being honored and fulfilled. Only then, and not before, should Israel be prepared to continue any negotiations with the Palestinian Arabs and, hopefully, not with Arafat, but with a more enlightened successor.

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pettifogging lawyers, and urban artisans.

"Female eloquence," Hesse also argues, "became a central and dangerous element in revolutionary politics." Yet by any measure the revolutionary authorities paid less attention to women's speech than to the grain supply, diplomacy, educational reform, the counter-revolution, or any of a dozen other pressing issues. Most ambitiously, Hesse claims that the French Revolution saw "a shift from a regime of rhetoric to a regime of philosophy," in which "script eclipsed oral performance as the basis of cultural as well as political legitimacy." It is hard to know how she might prove such a statement, which ignores the centrality of written law to the early modern French monarchy as well as the continuing significance of rhetoric in French political culture during the Revolution and long afterward. Does such a complex thing as a culture really "shift" in such sweeping and simple ways?

Luckily, the rest of Hesse's book resists such unsubstantiated claims. One crucial chapter even does something that has become sadly unfashionable in cultural history of late: it quantifies, in the classic manner of the *Annales* school. Hesse here makes the obvious point (obvious once she has stated it, that is) that if a rigid sexual "separation of spheres" had indeed taken place in revolutionary France, one would expect to find the number of female authors declining during the period. Instead, after an exhaustive combing of bibliographies and card catalogues, she produces the following eloquent figures as to the number of French women in print:

1766–1777	55
1777–1778	78
1789–1800	329

That last hard-won number goes a long way toward exploding the story of a new birth of servitude.

True, in the absence of comparable figures for male writers in the 1790s, Hesse cannot say for sure that the *proportion* of women writers increased, although it most likely did. And since this proportion almost certainly remained under four percent, many men may still have regarded women writers as little more than unthreatening curiosities. But the basic point is made. Far from driving women out of public life, the Revolution brought them into it.

This entry into print was also, Hesse emphasizes, an entry into a new and anarchic literary marketplace. The Revolution destroyed the cultural order of the Old Regime, in which a leaden system of prepublication censorship and official permissions stifled literary inventiveness, leaving much of the Enlightenment to be published in the shadows and sold "under the cloak." In its place, initially, came chaos, with copyright law in flux, piracy rampant, and readers abandoning books for the periodical press to keep abreast of the political whirlwind. Old-line publishing houses went under (as Hesse herself showed in an earlier book), and new ones increasingly followed a strategy familiar to modern observers of the industry: diving deep in search of the lowest common denominator.

By the late 1790s, France was awash in sensational Gothic novels and romances, often purportedly translated from English: *Miss Belhowe and Lord Clarendon, or the Trials of Love and Virtue*; *The Enchanted Knots; The Black Castle, or the Sufferings of the Young Ophelle*; *An Uncovered Pot With Nothing In It, or the Mysteries Underneath the Street of the Moon*; and so forth. These works were not only written in large part for women; they were also increasingly written by women. In France, women's writing marched hand in hand with print capitalism, even if the law still gave virtually complete control over married women's writings to their husbands (an arrangement actively reinforced by the French state as late as 1957).

THIS COMMERCIAL SUCCESS by no means endeared women to an emerging cadre of intellectuals and legislators, who loathed the literary chaos unleashed by the Revolution almost as much as they feared the political chaos. In its place, they longed to implement a new literary order: a rational, sober, enlightened, republican dispensation that would have no place for enchanted knots, black castles, or Miss Belhowe. These men mostly believed in the separation of spheres, and frowned upon women who "unnaturally" sought to publish romantic fiction instead of staying home as good republican housewives. After the end of the Terror in 1794 they founded new institutions, open only to men, to embody their ideals: a National Institute to serve as a sort of national cultural directorate, and a system of *grandes écoles* to train a new (male) elite. They also sought to develop new philosophical and ethical systems to undergird their creations.

To one sharp-minded observer, all these efforts amounted to nothing but an overwrought exercise in *déjà vu*. "The philosophical clergy," she wrote scornfully, "is as much a clergy as any other, and it was not worth the trouble to drive the curé from Saint-Sulpice in order to ordain the priests of the Pantheon." Her name was Isabelle de Charrière, and she was an assiduous reader of philosophy, a novelist, and the lover of Benjamin Constant. On the surface, her novel *Three Women*, written in 1795, fit easily into the fashion for melodramatic romances. Its heroines were a maidservant facing ruin after becoming pregnant, a noble orphan plotting to elope with a dashing aristocrat from far above her own social station, and a wealthy widow raising orphaned twins. But Charrière's treatment of these women, Hesse argues, was anything but conventional. The protagonists, each faced with ethical dilemmas, refused to invoke an absolute, general moral law, for the legal restraints upon them as women supposedly denied them the status of autonomous moral actors. Instead they followed what Hesse terms an "outlaw ethics," pragmatic and skeptical, holding their own interests above socially prescribed rules. Not surprisingly, male critics railed against the novel's "immorality."

Hesse explains that Charrière intended *Three Women* as a critique of Kant's influential ethical treatise *On the Proverb*, which the new cultural establishment had seized upon as a philosophical foundation stone for their new order. Her reading explicates the philosophical background with impressive economy, but more importantly it casts Charrière as the exemplar of those women writers who turned from philosophy and politics to fiction in the revolutionary era.

Novels, Hesse argues, are not simply a fallback for women excluded from formal philosophical training and formal involvement in political life. The form itself, with its highlighting of contingency, moral ambiguity, and the constant making and remaking of character and personality, perfectly suited women wrestling with manifold restraints upon their own personal autonomy. "This formal indeterminacy of the novel," she observes, "made it possible for women to constitute moral identities that were in some fundamental sense always unfinished and always open to the possibility of radical change." Germaine de Staël, the great novelist and critic (and another lover of Benjamin Constant), recognized this point when she wrote that "literature, properly speaking, becomes women's domain, and men consecrate themselves uniquely to higher philosophy."

The second half of Hesse's book consists of readings in what amounts to an alternate literary canon. Besides Charrière, Hesse considers Louise de Kéralio, who published radical journalism and histories during the Revolution, but later turned to novel writing; the prolific Mme de Genlis; and especially de Staël. And in connection with these last two Hesse develops her most intriguing theme, that of the "doubled self." Modern women writers, she suggests, have faced a danger unknown to their male counterparts: that their public personae will be interpreted as simple reflections of their inner female selves, and

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therefore dismissed as unworthy of consideration because of women's supposedly inferior moral and intellectual capacities.

In response to this predicament, Hesse argues, writers such as Genlis and de Staël sought in their work to emphasize the gap between inner selves and outer selves, to defend the opacity rather than the transparency of language, and to distinguish women's writing from men's as more naturally restrained, delicate, and veiled. Once again, it was fiction, above all other forms of writing, that gave women a refuge, and a medium suited to their message. De Staël warned of the dangers of female self-revelation in her novel *Delphine*, and herself became the thinly disguised protagonist of a novel titled *The Woman Author*, which depicted a woman wooing, under an assumed name, a general modeled on Napoleon.

Hesse limits her sustained analysis to the revolutionary era, but in a last, brief, tour de force of a chapter she extends her story an additional century and a half, touching suggestively on the careers of George Sand and Colette and ending with Simone de Beauvoir. In *The Second Sex*, Hesse notes, de Beauvoir constructed her own canon of French female writers—first and foremost de Staël and Colette—whose works she drew on in developing her diagnosis of women's condition. In her central section on the possibility of women's emancipation, nearly every citation came from French women's fiction. De Beauvoir thereby highlighted an alternate, dissident, female Enlightenment, constructed out of very different prose materials from its male counterpart. But by the very act of writing *The Second Sex*, after having herself initially ventured into public life as a novelist, de Beauvoir reversed the journey taken by Louise de Kéralio one hundred fifty years before, and reclaimed the domain of philosophy and politics for women's voices. She thereby helped to bring the "other Enlightenment" to a symbolic end, and opened the way to contemporary feminism.

ALL THIS IS a powerfully crafted historical vision, presented by Hesse in lucid and engaging prose. In stressing women's success in the literary marketplace, and the new opportunities that opened up there after 1789, Hesse dispels the idea that the French Revolution was an unmitigated disaster for women. In her emphasis on women writers' subsequent search for moral autonomy, she gives depth and nuance to a history that had previously focused too sharply on the quest for the vote. And by emphasizing the success of writers such as Charrière, Sand, and Beauvoir, she shows that it was possible for women to step outside the deep and gloomy shadows of the Pantheon.

Yet this frustratingly brief book also leaves important questions hanging. In an appendix Hesse provides a comprehensive bibliography of French women's writing for the years between 1789 and 1800, but she does not subject it to a thorough analysis, or ask whether the period's less well-known women writers engaged in the same sort of criticism that she finds in Charrière, Genlis, and de Staël. Hesse's treatment of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, meanwhile, is so brief that it unintendedly places George Sand and Colette in a subordinate position to their female predecessors, as if these two much greater novelists were producing only variations (if sublime ones) on established themes.

Most significantly, Hesse gives very little sense of how readers other than de Beauvoir actually read, understood, and reacted to this alternate canon of writers. A few scattered quotations, some buried in the footnotes, hint that the books in question stirred controversy and drew predictably misogynistic scorn from male defenders of the literary status quo. So they arguably possessed the power, and posed the sort of threat, that Hesse attributes to them. But how many women readers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw in these books what de Beauvoir saw, and what Hesse sees?

The question is particularly pressing because seven years ago one of the most eminent women historians in France published a book quite similar to *The Other Enlightenment*, but offering a strikingly different reading of some of the same writers. Mona Ozouf, best known for a landmark study of French revolutionary festivals, is one of the very few living French historians who is also a great prose writer: elegant, witty, even haunting. In *Les mots des femmes* (translated in this country as *Women's Words*), she sketched out richly textured portraits of ten French women writers, including Charrière, de Staël, George Sand, Colette, and de Beauvoir. Unlike Hesse, she had precious little sympathy for the last, titling the essay "Simone, or Greed," and criticizing the writer's "hypocrisy," "bad faith," lack of genius, and servile relationship to Jean-Paul Sartre.

Ozouf also appended to the book an unfortunate, caricature-laden "Essay on French Singularity," which accused "American feminism" of identifying all sex with rape and of trying to erase all sexual differences. In contrast, Ozouf praised French women for celebrating those differences, and for developing a distinctive voice without falling into "extremism." Overall, Ozouf interpreted French women's writing not as a critical response to the Revolution's new cultural order (which she did not find particularly exclusionary or misogynist), but as something complementary to it. So where Hesse sees a sharply critical tradition culminating in de Beauvoir, Ozouf saw a much gentler tradition of female self-expression that largely bypassed de Beauvoir and remains alive in writers such as herself.

Ozouf's evocation of a distinctly French style of women's writing was surprisingly ahistorical, and her downplaying of the revolutionary period's misogyny and exclusionary tendencies failed to convince. I much prefer Hesse's version of the story. But I find it unfortunate that Hesse does not even mention *Les mots des femmes*—not only because she should confront Ozouf directly, but because Ozouf's interpretation has value as historical evidence: it shows how at least one enormously intelligent and eloquent French woman has read the female literary canon.

Perhaps Ozouf's reading is an untypical one, driven less by her reading of the texts themselves than by the political conjuncture of the mid-1990s, in which centrist French intellectuals such as Ozouf were recoiling from the American import that they dubbed *le politically correct*. But if Ozouf's reading is at all typical, then Hesse's women writers start to look either less radically critical or more like figures whose critical intent went largely unremarked and unappreciated by their readers. It is a pity that Hesse does not deal with this issue more directly.

So were French women writers burrowing subversively under the heavy pillars of the Pantheon, or were they helping, perhaps unintendedly, to prop the building up? Without adding an analysis of novel-reading to her discussion of novel-writing, Hesse cannot provide an entirely satisfying answer to this question. Yet she has satisfyingly changed the terms in which the subject will be discussed from now on, and provocatively illuminated the changing contours of female experience in modern France. And in her deft combination of quantitative research and critical readings, Hesse provides a model of how to pursue the social history of ideas. ■

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JERUSALEM DIARIST

Soldier On

DESPITE THE BLUR CREated by the routinization of terrorism, when one atrocity supplants the next with such rapidity that we lose even the ability to mourn, several clarifying moments have emerged from the last 18 months of war. First was the lynching, in October 2000, of two Israeli reservists inside a Ramallah police station, which erased the distinction between Arafat's Palestinian Authority and "the extremists." Then there was the bombing, last June, of a discotheque filled with Russian teenagers on a Friday night in Tel Aviv, which erased the distinction between settlements and secular Israel. And last week there was the seder massacre, which merged mass murder with myth. "IN EVERY GENERATION, THEY RISE UP AGAINST US TO DESTROY US," read one newspaper headline about the massacre, borrowing the Hagaddah's mythic rendition of Jewish history. Even those of us who despise the far right's comparison of Israel's predicament to the Holocaust recognized this moment: The Nazis, after all, selected seder night to begin the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. Pragmatic Israelis, who usually avoid the grandiose language of good versus evil, have been forced by the seder massacre to concede that our conflict with the Palestinians isn't just a local squabble between competing nationalisms, but part of a global war against extremist Islamism—the latest totalitarian movement, after Nazism and Soviet communism, to "rise up against us" and target the Jews as its frontline enemy in a war for global domination.

THE ATTACK ON THE FESTIVAL OF freedom was a taunt—a reminder that we are no longer free in our land. Instead, we are being reghettoized through a gradually constricting siege that has taken from us a precious expression of our sovereignty—our ability to roam freely, to engage in the near-sensuous ritual of possessing the land through tactile exploration. The first intifada denied us freedom of movement in the territories and the Arab neighborhoods of East Jerusalem. This intifada has done that for the country as a whole. We are in danger of becoming a nation of agoraphobes. I know Israelis who don't leave their homes except for work and quick forays for groceries. My four-year-old son's baby-sitter won't take the half-dozen children in her care to the park downstairs. The fear undermines even the refuge of one's own home: One friend, who lives in a Jerusalem neighborhood where a car bomb was recently discovered in the underground garage of an apartment building, lies awake at night worrying that his building is about to explode. During the Gulf war, Shlomo Lahat, the former mayor of Tel Aviv, denounced his city's residents as cowards for fleeing missile attacks; now he has called on Israelis to stay in their homes and avoid public places.

AND THE FEAR HAS NOT ONLY FORCED us into our homes; it has locked us out of our national, communal space. In our dread of public places, notes Israeli journalist Ari Shavit, lies a threat to our sovereignty. Striking at a seder—which celebrates the founding of the Jewish people—is an unbearable symbol of the war against the Jewish collective. We are in the grip of an experiment testing how long a society can endure under relentless terrorism before it begins to disintegrate. If the experiment continues unchecked, we will become a completely atomized society—no longer a society at all. A state founded on the survival instinct of the Jewish people risks devolving into the survival instinct of the individual Jew. Rather than see Israel as the answer to Jewish survival, we are beginning to see it as a threat. Before I moved to Israel 20 years ago, Israeli relatives and friends would ask me when I was planning to settle here, convinced that this was the obvious place for a Jew to live. Now they ask me when I'm planning to return to New York. Our withdrawal from collective Israeli space could lead many here to withdraw from Israel altogether. And mass emigration of Israelis is one of the goals of this Palestinian war.

AND SO, THIS TIME, THE ABSENCE OF a comprehensible government plan didn't matter. This time, we understood that striking at the Palestinian Authority—a collective response to the assault on our collective being—was itself the plan. On seder night we knew that the Israeli restraint of the last two weeks, intended to accommodate the Zinni mission, was over. We had to hit back—not just against those attacking us, but against our own paralysis. That's why—for all the talk of draft resistance—almost all of the 20,000 reservists mobilized for the invasion of Palestinian territories showed up, without the usual attempts to evade reserve duty by pleading sick or citing family or work-related emergencies.

IN ONE SENSE, IT HARDLY MATTERS that this military operation won't stop the suicide bombers. (Indeed, nothing short of destroying the terrorist infrastructure known as the Palestinian Authority is likely to contain the terrorist assault.) In this war for the survival of our public spaces, reaffirmation of our collective identity is itself a victory. The Zionist revolution has long since forfeited its ideal of the Jewish worker and the Jewish farmer; now, it is the Jewish fighter whose viability is in the balance.

AFTER THE HOLOCAUST, THE ONLY enemy with a chance of defeating the Jews was one that could hide behind its own weakness. The Palestinians presented us with an unbearable dilemma, forcing us to choose between the two non-negotiable demands of Jewish history: not to be oppressors and not to be naïve about our enemy's intentions. The very weakness of the Palestinians has been their strength: Precisely because of their vulnerability, we minimized their malevolence, going so far as to create and even arm Arafat's Authority. Now, though, the Palestinian war of national suicide has removed our guilt and squeamishness.

FOR ISRAELIS, THERE IS SOMETHING surreal in the world's preoccupation at this moment with political solutions to the Middle East crisis. Mitchell-Tenet, the Zinni mission, the Saudi plan—all assume a conflict amenable to rational solutions, a Palestinian leadership ready to accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state. But Arafat in his besieged office proclaiming his desire to die like the seder suicide bomber—"Oh God, give me martyrdom like this," he told AL-JAZEERA on March 29—evokes a mythic evil immune to compromise. Does anyone imagine that the Israeli public—even those of us who in principle are ready for almost any concession in exchange for real peace—will accept a plan that involves "sharing" Jerusalem with Arafat?

THE WORLD ASKS ANXIOUSLY: WHAT will be the consequences of Israel's invasion? For Israelis, that isn't even a question. For us, the only question that matters, at least for now, is whether the fragile collective identity of "Israeli"—stretched thin over a bewildering ethnic and ideological cacophony—will continue to exist. That question will be answered not by the results of the battle, but simply by our willingness to fight it.

YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

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Who says we are winning the $19 billion-a-year drug war?

- New drugs and more dangerous forms of the old drugs are widely available, e.g. crack and methamphetamine.[1]

- Adolescent drug use has been increasing since 1990.[2]

- The age at which people first try heroin, cocaine, and marijuana is constantly dropping because there are so many new users.[3]

- The price of heroin and cocaine is at its lowest point in 20 years and the purity of both drugs is at near record levels.[4]

- Overdose deaths and mentions of drugs in hospital emergency rooms are at record levels.[5]

- Bans on the sale and availability of clean syringes have added significantly to the spread of HIV/AIDS.[6]

Who says we're winning . . . other than frightened politicians, ideologues, and people who make their living from prohibition?

Prohibition. It still doesn't work.

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1 ONDCP, National Drug Control Strategy, "Methamphetamine Lab Seizures, by State 1995-2001," pg 108, Table 67, February 2002 citing El Paso Intelligence Center; ONDCP.
2 Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, *Monitoring the Future* (December 2001).
3 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, "Summary of Findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse" (Rockville, MD: SAMHSA, September 2001).
4 ONDCP, *The Price of Illicit Drugs: 1981 Through the Second Quarter of 2000,* prepared by Abt Associates (Washington, DC: ONDCP, October 2001), Table 1, pp. 28-30, and Table 2, pp. 31-33.
5 Murphy, Sheila L., Centers for Disease Control, "Deaths: Final Data for 1998", National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), pp. 1, 10; Office of Applied Studies, *Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2000* (March 2001 update).
6 CDC, *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, 2000, 12 (2) 2001, Table 30; Lurie, P. & Drucker, E., "An Opportunity Lost: HIV Infections Associated with Lack of a National Needle-Exchange Programme in the USA," Lancet, 349:604-8 (1997).

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